WHY THOUSAND YEARS?

WILLIAM MASSELINK

WHY THOUSAND YEARS?

or

WILL THE SECOND COMING BE PRE-MILLENNIAL?

by

Rev. William Masselink, Th.M., Th.D.

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To My Wife

PREFACE

When I commenced my special study on this subject there was no thought of ever putting it into print. Many of the recent developments in and around Grand Rapids suggested the idea that a plain declaration of the position of our standards written in a simple language might be beneficial to some in our circles. Some of the burning questions of to-day in connection with present day Premillennialism will be considered. No apology is necessary to bring these facts to the attention of our Christian people. I was encouraged in this undertaking by many of my colleagues and friends. An earnest effort has been put forth to avoid anything that might be legitimately construed as an unbrotherly attack against fellow Christians with different views.

At this time it is also fitting to express my deep appreciation of indebtedness to those whose instruction in the way of books, lectures, paper articles and personal conversations have furnished me with substantial material for this book. First of all I want to refer to Dr. G. Vos of Princeton Theological Seminary. Much of the contents can be traced back directly or indirectly to his class lectures in Princeton in the various fields of eschatology and to the books and articles which have appeared from his hand. The class lectures of Dr. B. Warfield have also been used advantageously in our present composition. Dr. A. Kuyper's recent publication on "De Voleinding der Eeuwen," Bavinck's "Dogmatiek," "The Systematic Theology" of Dr. Hodge, and the class notes in dogmatics of our own Prof. Berkhof, together with his pamphlet on "Millennialism" have been of material benefit. The mention of many other worth while books and articles that were used extensively must now be omitted for the sake of brevity. A more complete bibliography can be found on the back page of the book.

May the Great King of the Church be pleased to use these meager means to be instrumental in creating a better understanding of prophecy to the honor and glory of His Great Name.

William Masselink

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WHY THOUSAND YEARS?

Chapter I
INTRODUCTION

The return of our Lord always occupied a very prominent position in the minds and hearts of thoughtful Christians. Before leaving this world Jesus said, "I will come again," and the Church has not forgotten that precious promise. This continued expectation of God's children is not at all hard to understand. The doctrine of the Second Coming is often recorded in Holy Scripture. We read of it both in the Old and New Testament. In the New Testament alone there are at least three hundred and eighty direct references to this event.

The return of the Lord is vitally connected with all the fundamental doctrines contained in God's Word.

It is also bound up with many sublime promises and earnest exhortations to high and holy living. The first and second coming of Christ are the two epoch-making events on this side of eternity. As before the incarnation of Jesus everything that took place was directly connected with the Saviour's birth so we may say God is now preparing the world and the church for the Lord's return. We believe the Second Coming of Christ to be the most imminent event on the horizon of time.

The whole Church expects Jesus to come back but all do not think alike of this coming. The Liberal Church of to-day is looking forward to a spiritual return. Jesus will never again be seen with the physical eye. The "Spirit of Christ"

will gradually gain control within the human heart. This we are told is the Second Coming. Shailer Mathews, Dean of the Divinity School of Chicago, recently published a pamphlet in which he speaks of Christ's coming as taking place during the present time. The gradual realization of the universal Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man is identified with Christ's return. This, says Shailer Mathews, is Christ's Second Coming. Such a misinterpretation of Scripture prophecy can hardly pass as Christian.

It is of greater importance for us to know what the true Christians think of Jesus' return. Also here we are sad to say there is a great diversity of opinion. Speaking in general we may say there are three views and all three have their ardent supporters. Some believe that the return of Christ will precede the Millennium; they are known as the Premillennialists. Others believe that the return of Christ will follow the Millennium; these call themselves Postmillennialists. Still others hold that there will be no Millennium at all; this class is known as A-millennialists.

In the following pages we hope to prove that the so-called Premillenarian view of Christ's return is in conflict with some of the clearest prophecy of both Old and New Testament. Premillennialism is the view that maintains that Christ will reign a thousand years before the final judgment. At the very outset we want to make plain our position over against those who entertain different views. Do not misunderstand us. Our Premillenarian brethren must be regarded as true followers of Christ. In regard to many of the fundamental doctrines of Scripture we heartily agree. Some of their leaders are outstanding men in American Conservative Christianity. We highly esteem men like Haldeman, Gray, and our former Professor Dr. Erdman, and have respect for their scholarship.

With this in view we wish to approach our subject with modest reserve. The unfulfilled prophecies must be approached with a humble and prayerful attitude. The spirit of presumption and conceit never becomes a Christian. The whole Word of God is given by inspiration of God "and is profitable for

doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." No part of God's revelation was ever intended to produce strife between the followers of Christ.

A Proper Appreciation of Chiliasm

The Premillenarian zeal for orthodoxy must be admired by every Christian. We love to hear him defend the authority of the Bible against the assaults of modern unbelief. The whole atmosphere of his spiritual life radiates a warmth of spirituality and love for the truth.

(1) That Premillenarianism has many commendable features no lover of the truth will deny. *This present day movement appears as a happy contrast to the Modernism of to-day.* With savage malice and unheard of subtility much is being done to-day to undermine the faith of the saints. Many of our leading seminaries are hotbeds of rank unbelief and infidelity. The present condition of the Christian Church in general is alarming to the extreme. Many of the church leaders debate with themselves whether the Bible is after all the inspired Word of God or only an invention of man. Practically all of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion are openly questioned and not a few are boldly denied. The doctrine of the supernatural birth of Jesus, the vicarious atonement, the bodily resurrection, the second coming of Christ, together with the judgment and heaven and hell are everywhere repudiated. Chiliasm stands as an effective antidote. Our Premillenarian brethren approach the Bible as the inspired Word and humbly bow before its authority.

(2) *Premillennialism also comes with a timely well grounded warning to the Christian Church* against the present tendency of unscriptural optimism which is becoming quite current. It is true that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation for everyone that believeth and that Christ through the preaching of the gospel shall establish His Kingdom and triumphantly gain the victory. Nevertheless the Church deserves to be cautioned earnestly against all unbiblical enthusi-

asm. The closing hours of this present dispensation are prophetically described as an age of apostasy and unbelief. The parables of the wise and foolish virgins, the wheat and the tares, the unjust judge and the Pauline prophecies contained in Thessalonians, as well as the dark picture that is held before us in the Apocalypse, come to us with many warnings. Says Professor Berkhof, "Premillennialism deserves credit for calling attention to the coming apostasy however unpleasant its contemplation may be and for reminding the Church of the fact that the future of Christianity is not as rosy as it is often pictured," (Notes on Kingdom).

(3) To this must be added the *proper re-emphasis on the Second Coming of Christ.* This great fact is altogether too often forgotten by the Christian Church. It is most certainly under-emphasized in a lamentable way in much of the preaching. Christ's coming always occupied a very prominent place in the Christian Church of old and it is repeatedly placed upon the foreground in the preaching of the apostles.

(4) *Premillennialism also comes with a deserved protest against many churches because of the cold spiritual atmosphere that radiates from within.* The Christian religion is not only a matter of the head but also of the heart. One of our Christian Reformed ministers said recently, "Head culture is good but heart culture is far better." Instead of immediately passing unfavorable judgment on all that which is contrary to our opinion it is far wiser calmly to sit down and carefully weigh the matter from every angle. Perhaps there is a well deserved rebuke in God's gracious providence that comes to us from the Premillenarian brethren. Must we not admit a sad lack of spiritual warmth among many of our people? Pharisaic legalism is becoming more than an imaginary danger. The letter of the law is often substituted for the spirit, and rule upon rule takes the place of proper emphasis upon well grounded principles that are firmly established in God's holy Word. Cold dogmatism and matter of fact exegetical analysis do not satisfy the spiritual yearning of the heart. The Biblical truths must be expounded in such a way that the Christian can discern their spiritual value. Cold formalism

must make room for the glowing warmth that is based upon true inner experience.

(5) *Chiliasm also directs the attention of the Church to the eschatological research of the Scriptures.* Many of the great doctrines of the Bible have received due attention in the past but the doctrine of future things is still an unexplored field. Many books are now being published on "The Consummation of the Age," "The Coming of Christ," "The Signs of the Time," etc. This in itself is a very promising sign.

Chiliasm must also be commended for calling the attention of the Church to the seriousness of the present time. The predicted signs of the Bible are apparently coming to their realization. Wars and rumors of wars surround us, apostasy is on the increase and the love of many is beginning to wax cold. The days of Sodom and Gomorrah have come back to the earth. A large class of serious minded Christians are deeply concerned because of that which they see.

PARTING OF WAYS

All this and much more could be said that is highly commendable of a large group of the Premillennialists. It gives us a touch of sadness that in spite of all the good that has been said there is *nevertheless a sad deficiency in this whole scheme of Scripture interpretation.* No Biblical doctrine however precious it may be, may be so exclusively emphasized as to lead to wild fanaticism. "Corn ground into meal is most nourishing food but if one element is extracted to the exclusion of the rest it may be manufactured into alcohol which produces intoxication—the counterpart of fanaticism," (Morris, Drama of Christianity, page 25). All Christians should regard the Second Coming of Christ with joyful anticipation and fervently unite in the prayer, "Come Lord Jesus, come quickly." Each should contribute all that is within his power to hasten the day when "All Israel shall be saved and the fullness of the Gentiles shall enter in." Controversies over human conceptions of a future Divine event are not calculated to hasten the fulfillment of this prophecy. God's predictions con-

cerning the future were never intended to agitate the mind of the Church.

The Premillennialists differ from us in their conception of some extremely fundamental doctrines of our Christian faith. We are exceedingly sorry to be compelled to part ways. Enough has been said to make it clear that our present controversy is not with any individual or group of Christians but rather with a certain system of thought which we believe to be wrong. We feel convinced that many of the views broadcasted to-day are decidedly detrimental to the welfare of God's Kingdom and Cause, and if consistently carried out will lead to the repudiation of many precious truths that have always been dear to the Church of God: truths which Christians have adhered to throughout the ages, and for which our forefathers have suffered imprisonment and martyrdom in order that they might be perpetuated. It is for this reason only that we have undertaken to submit the contents of this book to your earnest consideration.

Chapter II

MAIN FEATURES OF CHILIASM

The Main Features

It is first of all essential for our present discussion to have a clear understanding of the general features of the doctrine which is known as "Pre-millennialism" or "Chiliasm." The word "millennium" is derived from two Latin words, mille, meaning thousand, and annum, meaning year. So too Chiliasm comes from the Greek "chilias," which signifies a thousand.

The Premillennialists believe that Jesus Christ will reign for a thousand years in Palestine. At the end of this millennial reign He shall judge the quick and the dead. The general principle of a rigid literal interpretation of all prophecy is constantly appealed to by the advocates of this view. When Jesus comes back He shall re-establish the throne of David; and both Jews and Gentiles will become recipients of His covenant blessings.

We are told that Jesus intended to establish an earthly Jewish kingdom at His first coming. He began His ministry by proclaiming to the Jews that this Messianic kingdom was now at hand; but alas, when these temporal blessings were offered the Jews rejected the promised earthly kingdom which had come nigh to them. They refused Jesus as their king. As a result the kingdom that was actually at hand when Jesus was on earth could not be set up because of their unbelief. Instead of becoming recipients of these blessings and subjects in this earthly domain they were scattered among the Gentile nations. With this the kingly reign of Christ was also postponed till His second coming.

During the intervening period a mystery was revealed of

which the Old Testament prophets had not even dreamed. The Church of Christ was called into existence. This Church is sharply distinguished from the Old Testament Israel. In the dispensation of grace she will be gathered out of Jew and Gentile, and of this church Christ is not king but only head. To her is entrusted the glorious task to evangelize the nations through the preaching of the gospel. The proclamation of God's Word will not bring about the conversion of the world but serve as a testimony against it. When finally the insufficiency of the means of grace are revealed Christ will make a sudden appearance. The pious dead will come out of the grave. These and the saints then living shall be gathered with Christ in the air. This is the rapture of the saints. During this time a period of tribulation and bitter anguish shall reign upon the earth. The Antichrist shall make his appearance and perform signs and wonders. The tribulation will be a means to harden the hearts of men instead of melting them to bitter repentance. During this time the Lord shall gather Israel in Palestine where they shall be converted to the Lord and accept Jesus as their king.

At the end of this tribulation Christ and the saints shall descend to execute judgment upon His enemies. This is the second coming. The living will then be judged and the sheep separated from the goats, the Antichrist and his power overthrown and Satan bound a thousand years. The saints that have died during the time of tribulation will be raised. Christ will establish His throne in Jerusalem, city and temple will be rebuilt and the ceremonial law with altar and sacrifices reestablished.

The Messianic age is now ushered in. It is a period of great prosperity and blessedness. The wilderness shall blossom as a rose and the solitary places shall be glad. The lame shall walk and the blind shall see and the results of sin shall be removed. During this period there will be a great conversion. The fulness of the Gentiles shall enter in and all Israel shall be saved.

After the Millennium Satan shall be let loose for a little while. Under his influence Gog and Magog shall make a final

onslaught upon God's kingdom. They are then destroyed by fire falling from heaven and Satan is cast into the pool of fire and brimstone. After that there will be the resurrection of the rest of the dead. The Church is translated into heaven and Israel stays on earth. Christ shall reign as eternal king of the old covenant people and that which was offered to Israel at His first coming; namely, the Messianic Jewish kingdom with its earthly splendor and glory will now be set up. Cf. Berkhof, Pr.

The general features may be briefly summarized as follows:

1. A literal interpretation of prophecy, making the thousand years of Revelation 20 refer to the millennial reign of Christ.

2. At Christ's coming the millennial reign begins. Christ then establishes an external earthly dominion which shall last a thousand years.

3. The seat of His government shall be in Jerusalem from where He will rule the church.

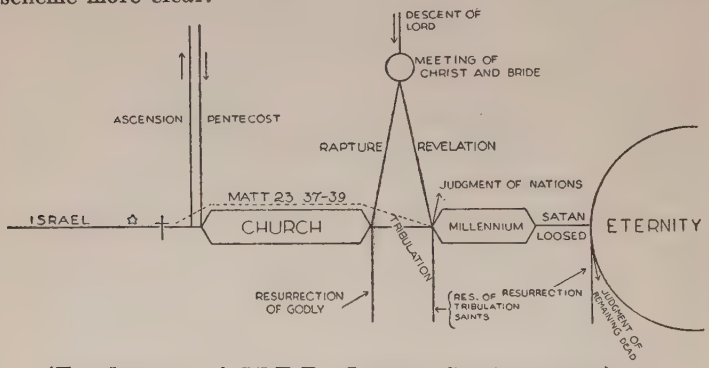
4. The resurrection of the godly dead takes place at the return of Christ. This is considered to be the first resurrection mentioned in Revelation 20.

5. During this period of a thousand years the Jews will enjoy special pre-eminence and honors above the Gentile Christians. Christ shall be king of the Jews.

6. The whole period is represented as a time of great prosperity and blessedness. Israel shall be instrumental in bringing about a great conversion. The season of great refreshing spoken of in the Acts of the Apostles will be realized.

7. After the thousand years are finished the rest of the dead shall rise. This is considered to be the second resurrection mentioned in Revelation 20. Christ will then judge the world. This in turn is followed by the consummation of the church and the end of the world.

The following diagram may make the whole Chiliastic scheme more clear.



(For diagram cf. W.E.B., Jesus is Coming p. 72.)

CONFUSION AMONG THE CHILIASTS

There is, however, a great diversity of opinion in regard to almost every one of the above mentioned particulars. In the early rabbinical writings the duration of the Messianic kingdom is often limited to a shorter period of time. In the fourth book of Ezra the reign lasts four hundred years. In the gospel of Nicodemus it is represented as lasting five hundred years. The Jewish Talmud and present day Chiliasm extend it over a period of a thousand years.

Among the Premillennialists themselves there exists a great confusion of ideas in regard to almost every one of the above mentioned facts. The pious Bengel believes that Christ's earthly kingdom will continue for two thousand years. Darby and others think it will be of much shorter duration—lasting only seven years. On the other hand we find that Lange speaks of the unlimited duration of the millennial reign. Many of the Chiliasts expect a national conversion of Israel who will then return to Palestine and enjoy special privileges. Some contend that the Jews will first be converted and then return to Palestine and others that they will first return to Palestine and then be converted. Generally speaking, the

Chiliasts are looking forward to a rebuilding of Jerusalem, restoration of the temple, altar, priesthood and Old Testament sacrifices. The Old Testament sacrifices which shall continue to be offered during the millennium will serve as a lasting commemoration to Christ's death on the cross.

There is also much difference of opinion in regard to the nature of the kingdom that shall be set up. Burnet, Ebrard and others believe the prosperity to exist in sensual enjoyment. The thousand years are generally conceived of as a transition period from the present to the eternal, a kingdom in which the believers are being prepared for heaven and in which they enjoy a foretaste of the eternal glory. Nevertheless this salvation is considered to be incomplete.

The Supposed Scriptural Basis for Chiliasm

The Chiliasts base their belief on some of the Old Testament prophecies, and also on several passages in the New Testament of which the passage in Rev. 20 is by far the most important. The passages in the Old Testament are those which refer to the restoration of Israel to the promised land. That these predictions which we find in the prophecies refer to more than the Babylonian exile cannot be doubted.

The following passages are often referred to: Isaiah's prediction that the wilderness and the solitary places shall be glad, the desert shall blossom as a rose, the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the highway shall be called the way of holiness over which the unclean shall not pass, Isa. 42:15, 16; 43:19, 20; 35:1-9; 41:17-20.

It is predicted that they shall not all return as the Lord shall sift them as grain, Amos 9:8-10. The destruction is positively decided and only a remnant shall return, (Isa. 4:13; 6:13; 7:3; 10:21; 11:11). One out of a city and two out of a family shall be brought back, (Jer. 3:14). Two parts shall be destroyed but the third part shall be saved, Zech. 13:8, 9. But those remaining shall be a holy people unto the Lord, Hos. 1:10, 11.

Joel predicts that the Lord shall live on in Zion. Isaiah says that Zion and Jerusalem, kingship and sacrifice, priest-

hood, temple, altar and feasts will be restored, Isa. 28:16; 30:19; 33:5; 35:10; 52:6; 60:7; 61:6.

With these spiritual benefits are associated many temporal blessings; e.g., war shall be no more as spear and bow shall be broken, (Hos. 2:18) swords shall be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks, nations shall learn war no more, (Isa. 2:4; Mic. 4:3, 4).

The land then shall be exceedingly productive, Am. 9:13, 14; Hos. 2:17, 20, 21; 16:6; Isa. 32:5-20. Even the animals shall be changed and receive a different nature, Isa. 11:6-8; 65:25. Heaven and earth shall be renewed and former things shall pass out of memory, Isa. 34:4; 51:6; 65:17; 66:22. Sun and moon shall pass away and there shall be a continual day, as the Lord Himself shall be the continual light, Isa. 60:19, 20; Zech. 14:6, 7. Neither shall there be any more sickness, mourning and weeping, Zech. 25:7-8; 30:19; 65:19. In that day, death shall be swallowed up into victory, Isa. 25:8.

Finally the dominion of the Messiah shall stretch over all the land and over all people, the Gentiles as well as the Jews, Ps. 2:21; Ps. 24, 45, 46, 47, 48, 68, 72, 86, 89, 96, 98. Israel shall receive the Gentile nations as her heritage, Am. 9:12, and all the heathen shall be judged, Joel 3:2-15.

Upon the literal interpretation of these and other like passages in the Old Testament prophecies and in the New Testament mainly upon Rev. 20, the Chiliasts base their doctrine of the Millennium. This literal interpretation is then brought into harmony with the rest of the scriptures, and in this process the Chiliasts often subject the plainest didactic prose to the most unnatural exegesis.

Clearly, it doesn't require any proof for anyone that predictions such as these have not as yet found their fulfilment upon this earth. Hence, according to the Premillennial view, there must be a time coming when this shall find realization. Jerusalem and Palestine shall be rebuilt. Even the temple, and its altars, and the priesthood shall be re-established; and the promised Messiah, the Deliverer of Israel, shall appear as

King to reign there. It is not necessary to give a long list of texts which the Chiliasts use to paint in more vivid colors the splendor of that future earthly Kingdom of the Messiah.

Chapter III

THE HISTORY OF CHILIASM

"What is the origin of this strange doctrine?" you ask. The careful study of church history will furnish us with the conclusive answer. *Premillennialism is a descent of ancient Judaism.* There is a striking resemblance between the offspring and the parent. The old Jewish conceptions of an external Messianic kingdom have found their perfect embodiment in the Chiliastic theory of the millennium. Premillennialism is a relic of Judaism. Dr. Hodge says of this, "It is a Jewish doctrine. The principles adopted by its advocates in the interpretation of prophecy are the same as have been adopted by the Jews in the time of Christ; and have led substantially to the same conclusions. The Jews expected that when the Messiah came He would establish a glorious earthly kingdom at Jerusalem; that those who had died in the faith should be raised from the dead to share the Messianic reign; that all nations and peoples on the face of the earth should be subject to them; and that any nation that would not serve them should be destroyed. All the riches and honors of the world were to be at their disposal. The event destroyed these expectations; and the principles of prophetic interpretation on which these expectations were founded were proved to be incorrect," Hodge Sys. Theol.-Esch.

EXAMINATION OF OLD JEWISH WRITINGS

The Judaistic features of Chiliasm can be readily seen by an examination of the Apocalyptic writings of the Jews. The genesis of this doctrine may be found in these writings which are generally dated in the pre-Christian period. The Jews divided the future into two separate periods. The first era is considered to be of a temporal nature and is designated

as the kingdom of the Messiah. The second era is of eternal duration and is called the kingdom of God. The transient Messianic kingdom prepares the way for the final setting up of the eternal kingdom of God. This is exactly the position of the Premillennialists of to-day. Christ's Messianic kingdom comes first and after that the kingdom of God. That the Chiliasts have incorporated a part of ancient Jewish eschatology in their scheme of the future is very evident. A general survey of the Jewish writings is all that is necessary to establish this fact. In the book of Enoch (chap. 91, 93) the entire course of the world is divided into ten weeks. At the close of the tenth period the eternal stage begins. In the third book of Sible the Messianic reign is first represented and after it has overcome its enemies, the kingdom of God begins. We find the same distinction in the Psalms of Solomon where the preliminary Messianic kingdom is described as something transitory. In Psalms 17 and 18, and in Psalm 3:12, we read of the resurrection to eternal life.

Coming down to the Christian period we meet this twofold kingdom idea in the Slavic Enoch and in the Apocalypses of Ezra and Baruch. In these writings the duration of the Messianic period is fixed by a definite number of years. In 4 Ezra 7:28 the reign of Christ lasts four hundred years. After that time Christ with the rest of His earthly creatures, dies. Then the dead awake and the eternal judgment begins. So also in Baruch 40:3 the reign of Christ is represented as lasting till the world comes to an end.

In many of the Jewish writings the presentation of these two stages has resulted in an orderless confusion. In the Similitudes of the book of Enoch and in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs only one of the two aspects of the future hope is emphasized, whereas the other, while not denied, is nevertheless left in obscurity. For this reason scholars have thought that to bring order in the confusion the various elements were distributed over two successive periods. The Messianic was put first by the Jews as it was thought that the political hopes would first go into fulfillment and thereupon

the new order of things should assume its eternal sway, cf. Pauline Esch. Vos.

Whether the Jews borrowed their materialistic conception in regard to the future kingdom from ancient Babylonian eschatology as is maintained by Dr. Bavinck, Hoekstra, and others, or whether Dr. Vos is correct in ascribing this Jewish view to their own carnal interpretation of Old Testament prophecy, is a question of minor importance for our present purpose. We believe with Dr. Vos that the charge of Babylonianism need not be laid against Chiliasm. It is not difficult for us to understand that Judaism with its external legalism and carnal expectation would come to such a materialistic conception of the Messianic reign. We do not believe that the Jews borrowed their views from heathen eschatology.

The later Jewish eschatology which was written during the time of the apostles and the early church is far more sensualistic than that which precedes. Baruch is especially typical of this sensualistic coloring. He speaks of the destruction of the enemies at Christ's coming. After the evil forces are subdued there will follow a period of prosperity and great joy. It is said that a vine will then have a thousand branches, every branch a thousand clusters and every cluster a thousand grapes, etc. We also read, "In those days reapers will not have to exert themselves, and those that build will not have to toil, for of themselves all work will have progress together with those who labor thereon."

The Jewish Talmud, which is of later origin, tells us that the promised Messiah will destroy the fourth world kingdom which is predicted by Daniel. Israel will be redeemed from the bondage and be gathered from the dispersion to their own land. The Messiah will raise the dead. Jerusalem and the temple will be rebuilt, law and ceremony restored and the kingdom of glory established. During this time the Gentiles shall live in servitude to Israel and the kings of the world will honor the Messiah with costly gifts and sacrifices.

JEWISH ORIGIN VERIFIED BY NEW TESTAMENT

This expectation of an earthly Messianic kingdom is also spoken of in the New Testament. The Jews were then suffering under the yoke of the Roman empire as a conquered people. The loss of their independence and the high taxes that had to be paid to the Roman government at this time filled every true Israelite with sadness. They longed intensely for delivery from the yoke of Rome. In former years the children of Jacob had suffered under the cruel bondage of the Egyptians. The oppression was hard and long but God came to their rescue and delivered them by supernatural power. In like manner they expected a divine deliverance. The great Deliverer was promised in the Old Testament prophecies. With the coming of the Messiah they looked forward to the emancipation from Caesar's Yoke. The Jews could no longer be described as truly spiritual minded. From idolatry they had turned to legalism and externalism. After the Babylonian exile their whole religious life had lost its spirituality. They considered an outward obedience to the law sufficient to bring them temporal and eternal reward. Instead of seeking God first in their lives, they lived for themselves. Their thoughts were self-centered instead of God-centered. The sense of sin and guilt before a just God was almost entirely forgotten. That the promised Messiah should bring about the great ransom for sin through His substitutionary sacrifice as Isaiah and the prophets had foretold, was no longer remembered. Their whole religious life had reached too low an ebb for such an exalted hope. They were only concerned about themselves in their present bondage. That the promised Messiah would usher in the eternal heavenly kingdom as their prophet Daniel had predicted, was far from their thoughts. They were absorbed with the things of this world and entertained no such spiritual expectation. They could only be satisfied with the prospect of a kingdom in which the Jews could rule over their enemies. They looked for a redeemer from the tyranny of a temporal monarch rather than a Redeemer from sin and Satan. With feverish longing they were looking for a speedy coming of their earthly Messiah.

The anticipation of Christ's coming was a matter of general knowledge among all those who dwelt in Palestine. Even Herod had heard of it and at the time of Jesus' birth enquired eagerly from the high priest in regard to the place where Christ was to be born. The announcement of the new born king had filled him with anxiety. He looked upon the Babe that was born as an earthly rival to his throne. The necessary information was soon received from the chief priests and the scribes, Matt. 2:4 ff.

The apostle John informs us in the sixth chapter of his gospel that the Jews were ready to take Jesus and make Him king by force after the miracle of the Loaves and Fishes. Jesus, however, withdrew into the mountain. The people had seen the sign and became convinced that He was indeed the prophet that should come into the world. They were, however, only looking for an earthly kingdom. This carnal expectation becomes very evident at the close of the chapter when they murmured because He said He was the Bread of Life. The inspired writer tells us that this caused many of His disciples to go back and walk no more with Him. Jesus failed to satisfy their longing for an earthly king.

When at a later date the Pharisees asked Him concerning the time of the coming of the kingdom of God, the Lord replied, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, There! for lo, the kingdom of God is within you." The Pharisees were thinking of an earthly Messianic kingdom which was to come with observation and power. Jesus corrects their mistake by telling them the true spiritual nature of the kingdom. This could not be perceived by the unregenerate mind because the whole nature of that kingdom was elevated far above their realm of thought.

Jesus instructed His disciples by parables in order that they might know the "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." The contrast is sharply drawn between His true followers and the Scribes and Pharisees. The mysteries of the kingdom were hidden from the Pharisees and Scribes because of their carnal-mindedness. The great Dr. Warfield once said, "Had Jesus

immediately disclosed Himself as the Messiah of that spiritual kingdom He would not have lived another three weeks. The hatred of His enemies increased in the same proportion as it became more and more evident that He was the promised Christ. The resurrection of Lazarus from the dead was the climax. His Messianic mission then became so evident that immediately steps were taken against Him. That He came to seek and to save the lost and to establish that spiritual kingdom in which God would be all in all, went against the very grain of their reasoning. The disciples, however, were given to understand the mysteries of the kingdom through His parables. The superlative mystery of that kingdom was contained in its deep spirituality in contrast with the materialistic hopes of the Jews of that time.

The thought of an earthly kingdom was also predominant with Judas Iscariot. He followed Jesus with a purely selfish motive. Judas expected to reap great honor and temporal advantage from the Lord. When he sees that his earthly anticipation would never be attained he turns against his Master and betrays Him for thirty pieces of silver.

The expectation of an earthly kingdom is expressed strongly at the time of Jesus' crucifixion. The rulers together with the people that stood by reproached Him by saying, "If thou art the king of the Jews, save thyself." Their crude conception of Jesus' kingship could not be harmonized with His agonizing pain at Golgotha. This was so because they expected a different Messiah. His death on the cross was to them a convincing argument that Jesus was not the promised king of the Jews. They protested against the superscription of Pilate, "This is the King of the Jews," because they felt ashamed to acknowledge such a one as their king.

Even the disciples of Jesus were not entirely free from this mistaken earthly conception of His kingdom. The mother of the sons of Zebedee came with the foolish request that one of her sons might sit at His right and another at His left hand when He came in His kingdom. Jesus rebuked her by saying, "Ye know not what ye ask." The disciples still clung to this hope after the resurrection of the Lord. Luke informs

us in Acts that their last question to Him just before the ascension was, "Lord wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Jesus again corrects their mistaken conception by reminding them of the true spiritual nature of this kingdom. It would be realized through the preaching of the gospel after the Holy Spirit had qualified them for that supreme task. They should be His witnesses both in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth. It was not for them to know the times and the seasons of the final consummation of that heavenly kingdom because the Father had set that in His own authority.

The Chiliastic hope of an earthly kingdom is an importation of the eschatology of the Jews. This, we believe, has been made plain by the foregoing references to the Apocalyptic writings of Judaism as well as from the current expectations among the Jews that prevailed during the ministry of Jesus on earth. Jesus' teaching in regard to the nature and development of His kingdom can only be understood in the light of this fact. This relic of Judaism was still in the subconscious mind of the followers of Jesus before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It touches our hearts with pain to think that this Judaistic expectation which was repeatedly corrected and even severely rebuked by our Master, should again thrive within the present day Christian church.

HISTORICAL SURVEY OF PREMILLENNIALISM

The Chiliastic conception immediately found acceptance in the Christian church. To give a detailed historic account of this doctrine would be going far beyond the bounds of this book, therefore in our discussion we shall limit ourselves to what we consider the most important historical developments of this doctrine.

THE EARLY CHURCH

The Apostolic history shows us that many of the old church fathers were leaning toward this view. So for example Corinthes, who is thought to have been a contemporary of the Apostle John, believed that Christ would have an

earthly reign lasting a thousand years with His seat in Jerusalem. Papias in the middle of the second century holds the same view. Likewise Justin Martyr (about 150 A.D.) says that the majority of the Christians at his time were looking forward to an earthly kingdom, but he adds that there were also good Christians who had other opinions. Irenaeus (latter part of 2nd century) believed that after the destruction of the Roman Empire, Christ would return and would literally bind Satan with a rope.

On the other hand, in many of the writings of the other church fathers, we find no traces of Chiliasm; e.g., no mention is made of it in the two letters of Clemens of Rome, written to the church at Corinth, at about 90 A.D. We also do not find it in the letters of Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch at about 100 A.D., nor in the letters written in the latter half of the second century by Polycarpus, Bishop of Smyrna, nor in the polemic writings of Athenagoras and Theophilas of Antioch.

FROM THE THIRD CENTURY TO THE REFORMATION

From the third century onward until the Reformation, Chiliasm made little progress in the Christian church. The decline can largely be ascribed to the extension of Christianity to the Gentile countries and also to the unbroken prosperity which the church then enjoyed. The gnostic philosophy of this period and the Alexandrian school with its allegorical interpretations of the Scripture were also a great detriment to the progress of Chiliasm. By far the most important figure of this period was the great church father Augustine, whose far reaching influence also in this matter, extended even beyond the Reformation, as his views in this were in the main, accepted by the four great reformers of the sixteenth century. Augustine believed the Old Testament prophecy and Rev. 20 were to be interpreted spiritually; being symbolical of the eternal glory which the church would receive in the other world.

At the time of the crusades it was again thought that the

coming of Christ was at hand, in consequence of which many Christian worshippers returned to Palestine. Whenever war or persecution was present, Chiliasm again received a fresh impetus. In that way it found acceptance by a number of sects in the middle ages, but generally speaking it is true, that from the time of Augustine up to the Reformation, Chiliasm had little influence in the Christian church.

CHILIASM REJECTED BY THE GREAT REFORMERS

Chiliasm again revived during the dark period of the Reformation. This was largely due to the degradation of the Roman church at that time and also to the bloody persecutions which the church then endured. The doctrine, as we mentioned before, was rejected by both Luther and the other reformers with such absoluteness that it never appeared in any of their confessions, (Cf. Hoekstra's "Bijdrage tot de Kennis en de beoordeeling van het Chiliasme" pp 29). The Augsburg Confession explicitly states that they reject all those who spread the Jewish opinion, that prior to the resurrection of the dead the pious shall receive the administration of the world and then shall bring the ungodly under subjection, (Augsburg Confession, last Art.).

Hallazius reproduces the Reformed and Lutheran view on this subject when he says, "A millennial reign of Christ, characterized by a pre-eminent knowledge of the mysteries of God, by a holy life, and an earthly prosperity for those involved, is not to be expected by God's children in this world," (Cf. Hase, Hutterus redivivus, Lpz. 1868, pp. 279).

The view of the Reformed church on this subject finds expression in the "Confession Helvitica,"—"We reject the Jewish fancy that there shall be before the day of judgment a golden age in which the pious shall take over the control of the world after their enemies the ungodly have been subdued, because the Evangelists Matthew and Luke, as seen in Matt. 24-25 and in Luke 18, and also in the apostolic teachings as found in II Thess. 2, and in II Tim. 2, 4, give us quite a different representation," (Art. on Judgment, translated

from Dutch). So also in the "Nederlandsche Geloofsbelijdenis" no mention is made of a glorious reign of peace and prosperity of Christ and the believers and of a double resurrection after the coming of Christ. The last article of this confession explicitly states that the resurrection and final judgment shall both take place at the time of Christ's coming.

LATER GROWTH OF CHILIASM

Chiliasm was also very prominent among the Lutherans of Germany during this time. It especially revived with the Pietists under the influence of the pious Johann Albrecht Bengel in 1750. Soon after this the cold breath of rationalism swept over the whole continent. This was again followed by the bloody campaigns of Napoleon. When all this was going on Chiliasm prospered greatly. Practically all of the theological thinking in Germany and Holland not directly under the influence of the great Reformation, was colored by it. This is especially true of the Vermittelungs-Theologie of Germany represented by Peter Lange, Ebrard, Rothe, Hofmann, Delitzsch, Kurtz, and others in the first part of the nineteenth century. They interpreted the prophecies of Ezekiel about the new temple in a materialistic way and expected the fulfillment at Christ's second coming. Israel shall then be converted and all Levitical ceremonies restored as a retrospective commemoration of Christ's atonement.

Some of the other theologians of this time must be called mild Chiliasts. So, for example, the Dutch theologian Van Oosterzee expected only one return of Christ. This is to be followed by His reign upon earth, during which time part of humanity will live in a state of glory. The general conversion of the Jews and many of the Gentiles will then be realized. After this there will be the general resurrection and judgment. He however thought that the number "thousand" in Revelation 20, "is not arithmetical but a symbolical number; and nothing may be promised or expected of that period which is an irreconcilable contradiction with the principles laid down by Jesus Himself in John 4: 21. The predictions of the prophets also as to the national restoration of Israel, must

not be regarded alone, but understood according to the rule of Melanchthon: the gospel is the interpretation of prophecy," cf. Chr. Dog. of Van Oosterzee, Vol. 2, p. 799.

In our time the Jewish movement called Zionism deserves special attention in this connection. Special effort is put forth to bring the Jews back to Palestine. It is but natural that this movement is sympathetically observed by many Christians of the present day who are looking forward to the restoration of Israel to the promised land and the speedy inauguration of the millennial kingdom which they suppose will follow. The recent World War has also had an effect in stimulating the belief in this doctrine.

This brief survey of history shows that Chiliasm flourished during times of adversity and hardships. This also accounts for its great progress during the great war.

Chapter IV

ERRONEOUS INTERPRETATION OF PROPHECY

The main difference between the Chiliasts and those who do not hold their view, is centered in the method of Scripture interpretation. If all prophecy must be interpreted in a literal way, the Chiliastic views are correct; but if it can be proved that these prophecies have a spiritual meaning, then Chiliasm must be rejected. Therefore, first of all, the question here presents itself, how must this prophecy be interpreted? We shall endeavor to solve this question by seeking the answer of Scripture itself.

HOW NOT TO INTERPRET PROPHECY

Before entering upon this discussion we do well to observe that prophecy cannot always be determined by the interpretation the recipients may have put upon it. The Bible plainly teaches that often those who received the prophecy and even the prophets who gave it to the people, were not always able to distinguish between the form and the substance of that which they revealed. In Dan. 8: 26, we read, "Wherefore shut thou up the vision, for it shall be for many days." Likewise in Dan. 12: 7-8, "And I heard but understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?" In those passages the prophet himself testifies that the prophecy was not revealed to his own understanding. Turning to the New Testament we find that the apostle Peter speaks in the same way, "Concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which

was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them" I Pet. 1:10-11. That also the people did not always understand the revelation is implied in what our Lord says, "And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it come to pass, ye might believe" (John 14:29). The content of the revelation must therefore exclusively be measured by the intent and meaning of God Himself, and not by the recipients, or even the prophet's interpretations.

OLD TESTAMENT THEOCRACY A PICTURE OF THE FUTURE STATE

We see that the great principles of Israel's theocratic life were expressed in an earthly external form, because only in these forms could the principles be brought to the mind of the people. They were already contained in the Mosaic institutions, but their completion still laid in the future. We must continually bear in mind that in the Old Testament, church and state are together. To belong to the Jewish nation also included the membership in the Old Testament church. God Himself was not only king of Israel as a nation, but also king of His Old Testament church. The whole life of the covenant people was preeminently God-centric. Circumcision was a sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace as well as a badge of membership in the commonwealth of Israel.

The whole theocratic life of Israel was a pre-figuration of the future state when God shall receive the full glory and honor of all His saints; when Christ shall come again and sin and all its dire consequences shall be completely banished from the earth. Dr. Vos says of this, "The great basic principles that shape Israel's life now, will then shape it completely. Notice how this is concretely put in the Old Testament, as there the future eschatological theocracy is the absolute counterpart of the present theocracy. Its central seat will be in Jerusalem; it will have subjected the nations; it will therefore be a universal reign of God over all with the form and the organization of the present theocracy" (From Class notes in Esch. of the O.T.).

In this fact we find the correct solution relative to the purpose of God conveyed in the prophecies of the Old Testament. The future state is described in terms and colors taken from the present Old Testament theocracy. This gives us a portrayal of the future world. Israel is a type of the true Church of God. The whole prophetical language becomes intelligible only when viewed in the light of eschatology. The Messiah shall then have universal control over land and sea, and the remotest regions of the earth belong to His empire. War and destruction shall be no more. The great principles and ideas found in the Old Testament theocracy shall surely reach their completion. God will be all in all. The future state is pre-eminently God-centric. Of this truth the Old Testament theocracy was a type.

Fairbanks says in respect to this, "The prophets necessarily thought and spake under the conditions of their own historical position; so that it was not the image of the future which threw itself back upon the past, but rather the image of the past which threw itself forward on the future. The things which were and have been gave their form to the things which were to come" (Fairbanks Prophecies, p. 465).

PROPHECY TO BE EXPLAINED ACCORDING TO ITS NATURE

The predictions of the Old Dispensation can only be properly understood when viewed in the light of the fuller revelation of the New Testament. The prophetical prose must be explained according to its own nature. When Isaiah speaks of the Messiah as a tender plant, as a root out of a dry ground, or when he speaks of the Lord's elevating the hill of Zion to the top of the hills, or that one of a city and two out of a tribe shall be brought back, that all will be sprinkled with pure water, and that they will be purged from sin, that the mountains shall drop down new wine and the hills shall flow with milk, then everyone immediately feels that this is a poetic description that cannot be taken in the literal sense. The prophets themselves were conscious that they were using highly poetic language. With the names of Sodom, Gomorrah,

Edom, Moab, Philistia, Egypt, Assur, and Babylon, they often designated the power of the unregenerate world. That the prophets borrowed their figures from the usages and institutions of the Old Testament cannot be questioned. We see that the Messiah is often called David, the Church is spoken of as Zion, His people are called Israel, Canaan is often a type of heaven. The loss of God's favor was expressed by saying that they forfeited their inheritance, restoration of His favor was described as their return to the promised land.

ERROR OF RIGID LITERALISM

"The broad outlines, at least, of the prophecies appear to us sufficiently clear; and we believe that a sound method of study will give the humble student who is willing to put a stern check on his imagination and follow the leading of the exegetical hints alone, an adequately exact understanding of its chief details," (Warfield's Biblical Doc. p. 608). To interpret all that the prophets say of Jerusalem as referring to the earthly city, or to say that Israel always means the Jewish nation, would be to bring down heaven on earth and to transmute Christianity into the corrupt Judaism of the apostolic age. The author of the Hebrews speaks of the Old Testament ceremonies as something that "serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount," Heb. 8: 5.

The literalism insisted by the Chiliasts is a wrong and impossible system of interpretation. It requires that David in his own person shall reign over the renovated earth and that Elijah was to come in his person. This is precisely the way the Jews interpreted the prophecies of the Messiah's coming. Since this method was shown to be entirely wrong in explaining the prophecies concerning Christ's first coming, it would be the height of inconsistency to apply it once more in exactly the same manner to His second coming.

OLD TESTAMENT UNDERSTOOD IN LIGHT OF NEW

There is a prevailing tendency running through the whole Old Testament to exhibit the new dispensation under the image of the old. We do not erase the prophetical meaning when we maintain that that which is said of Zion or Jerusalem or of the temple and its sacrificial worship of the Theocracy and the many blessings promised to Israel in the old covenant, have reached their full realization in the New Testament church. Thus we throw fresh light upon these predictions. They receive a new life for us and the shadows and symbols of the old dispensation like the whole economy to which they belong become for us "the testimony of Jesus." From all this we may, however, not infer that there is no literal fulfillment of prophecy whatsoever. When Micah prophesied that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem it was literally fulfilled. But even there the fact in its completion meant a great deal more than the exact literal fulfillment. It is especially a prediction of Christ's humble birth. Frequently the context or other parts of Scripture make clear the way in which we are to understand prophecy. So for example, Ezekiel presents the last vision of the brighter future all under the aspect of the rebuilt temple which is perfect in structure and arrangement. John in his last vision of Revelation speaks of this as the Holy City, complete in its proportions and composed of the most precious stones, but having in it no temple. Scripture must be explained by Scripture and one prophecy must be interpreted in the light of the other.

"Many would have us choose definitely between the literal and the spiritual interpretations so-called, of prophecy throughout. But we decline to do so. We have no desire of being caught in this trap. The antithesis is false. No sensible expositor of Scripture follows either to the exclusion of the other. The fact is that literal and spiritual elements lie interlinked in prophecy. A single verse may contain both. Sometimes the two are easily distinguishable. In other cases we shall not be able to distinguish them with certainty until

the light of final fulfillment has dawned." (R. B. Kuiper "While the Bridegroom Tarries" p. 203).

CORRECT PRINCIPLE OF INTERPRETATION

The question then presents itself, how can we determine the intent of God in His prophecy? We are here in a very fortunate position, as we can determine the mind of God in this particular by our knowledge of the New Testament fulfillment of prophecy. In the New Testament the form is clearly thrown off, and the substance remains. An adequate exegesis of the Old Testament prophecy is possible only on the basis of the New Testament data. We can therefore derive our method of interpretation for the unfulfilled prophecy from the fulfilled, because we may safely deduce the guiding principles for the unfulfilled prophecy from the fulfilled predictions which are recorded in the New Testament.

RIGID LITERALISM WEIGHED AND FOUND WANTING

Let us therefore, first of all test this principle of literal interpretation by the prophecy which has already reached its fulfillment in the New Testament. (1) In the *first prophecy* uttered into the ears of fallen man, the Lord addressing the serpent said, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." If all this must be taken in prosaic style, the seed of the woman would naturally mean the woman's offspring, a child of promise, or collectively a line of children to be born of her. Consequently the serpent can only be the creature of the field then present. This primeval promise would then contain nothing more than an assurance of man's relative superiority to the most subtle beast of the field. From later revelation it is evident however, that the seed of the woman is here Christ who by His suffering, death and resurrection bruised the serpent's head. The serpent is Satan. Cf. Rev. 20:2.

(2) We shall refer to a few *other Messianic Prophecies* in connection with this. Micah, e.g., predicts that out of

Bethlehem was to come forth He that was to be ruler in Israel, the Messiah, the king of Zion. But it is held as a settled point that the Messiah has not yet appeared as a ruler over Israel, since the Premillennialists claim that Christ's kingdom begins with His second coming. In like manner it may be maintained that Jesus must still make good the prophecy of Zechariah by riding into Jerusalem on an ass, since it was distinctly as king of Jerusalem that the act in question was to be performed.

(3) *We fear that according to this interpretation a large portion of the Messianic ministry which the Evangelists have described as finished according to the Old Testament prophecy, must be regarded as still in the future.* For when, according to the prophecy of Isaiah, was He actually anointed to preach the Gospel to the poor? We also do not read of the literal fulfillment of the Psalmist's words respecting Him, of His ears having been bored, or His sinking in deep waters where there is no standing.

By accepting this literal interpretation we must come to the conclusion inevitably that the humiliation of our Lord has been accomplished only in part. The New Testament plainly teaches everywhere that it is the fulfillment of the Old Testament. The symbolism of the Old Testament pointed to something greater than a mere literal fulfillment. In Col. 2:11 we find the meaning of the true circumcision, as Paul there speaking of Christ says, "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ." Likewise Paul speaks of the Old Testament passover as having reached its fulfillment in Christ, "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us," I Cor. 5:7. In like manner we are told the meaning of the Old Testament sacrifice in Eph. 5:2, "As Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savor." So also the true people of God are called Israel, "And if ye be

Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise," Gal. 3:29.

(4) *The spiritualization of the present external form of prophecy did not begin in the New Testament however. It is already present in the Old Testament prophecy.* In Is. 66:23 we read that all the nations shall return to Zion on every Sabbath and on every new moon. Surely no literalist can deny the symbolism here. Many of the prophets already had the conception of a spiritual priesthood. Isaiah, with one single exception (9:25), gives a spiritual representation of the priesthood. Jeremiah declares the Ark of the Covenant is no longer to be remembered. Both Isaiah and Jeremiah declare that in the future the entire people will have access to God, Is. 54:13; 61:6; 66:21; Jer. 51:34. All of the prophets thought of the people of Jehovah as a true priestly people.

Hosea, foretelling the approaching bondage and captivity, represents it as a returning to Egypt, because it will be similar to the Egyptian bondage. He afterwards clearly shows that he actually does not refer to the country Egypt, by mentioning Assyria as the region where the humiliating discipline was to be experienced, and even with apparent contradiction to the former announcement declares that they would not return to Egypt, Hos. 8:13; 9:3; 11:5. The prophets often predict that Israel shall return to Zion. This is especially the case in the eschatology of the Psalms. In Psalm 47 the Land of Canaan is called the glory of Jacob whom he loved. Usually the thought rests on Zion as the centre of the Theocracy, Ps. 9, 15, 23, 27, 46, 48, 74, 79, 102. It is to be noticed, however, that in these eschatological prophecies, *eternity* is predicted whereas Premillennialism believes Christ's kingdom to last a thousand years. In Ps. 72:17 we read, "His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed." Likewise in Ps. 125:1, "They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever." There the eternity of Jehovah becomes a pledge for the eternal abode of His people in His presence.

So also we read in Ps. 132:12, 13, 14: "If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore. For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest forever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it." And again in Ps. 146:10: "The Lord shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations."

If these prophecies are to have a literal fulfillment then it is evident that they cannot refer to the Millennium, as these Psalms do not predict something transitory, but eternal. If the Chiliasts desire to appeal to these passages they must eternalize Zion. Dr. Hodge says, "The argument from the ancient prophecies is proved to be invalid, because it would prove too much. If these prophecies foretell a literal restoration, they foretell that the temple is to be rebuilt, the priesthood restored, sacrifices again offered, and then the Mosaic ritual is again to be observed in all its details. Such an interpretation renders one part of God's Word inconsistent with the other part," (Sys. Theol. Vol. 3, pp 808). To say that every prophecy shall be fulfilled in a strictly literal sense is inconsistent with the Scriptural presentation. We therefore reject the literal interpretation of prophecy because it contradicts the applications made of prophecy in both the Old and New Testament and if consistently carried out it renders one part of God's Word in contradiction to the other.

Chapter V

PRESENT DAY DISPENSATIONALISM AND THE DENIAL OF COVENANT OF GRACE

DIVINE REVELATION IS PROGRESSIVE AND ORGANIC

The Bible teaches us clearly that God's revelation is one organic whole and cannot be chopped up into different so-called dispensations. This organic revelation of God is progressive in its character. As there is a gradual growth of the plant in the natural world so that we first have the blade, then the ear and then the full grain in the ear; so we also find that God's special revelation to man concerning the great plan of salvation is gradual and progressive in its development. Two characteristics of the unity of the Bible demand our attention. First of all, this unity is of a profound nature and goes far deeper than the surface. The more carefully and deeply we study the Word of God the more complete do we find the unity to be. The second characteristic of this unity is that it is *organic*—that is to say, it is not of a dead thing like a stone or building, but a living organism like a plant or tree. In the first books of the Bible we have the germinant thought; after that we find the bud, then comes the blossom, and finally the ripened fruit appears. So, for example, we find the first prophecy of redemption through the suffering of Christ in Genesis 3:15 "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." The prophecies concerning the redemption continue throughout the whole Old Testament in varied form, and finally

reach their realization in the cross of Calvary. In germinal form the whole redemptive truth is already contained in this passage.

But as time went on the meaning and implications of it were more clearly defined. Later revelation has greatly enriched our knowledge of this first promise. In Gen. 49:10 we read of the Shiloh prophecy. Here the Deliverer is spoken of as a King coming out of the tribe of Judah. The Balaam prophecies in Numbers 24 speak of Christ's rule extending over the Gentile world. In Deut. 18:15 He is designated as the Prophet like unto Moses and in Psalm 110 His High Priesthood is compared to that of Melchizedek. Isaiah 53 tells us that this salvation shall be brought about by vicarious suffering. So the gradual development is clearly seen.

We may compare the organic progress in revelation to the growth of a tree. If the trunk of a tree is sawed in two you will see many concentric circles or rings each of which represents a year of growth. It will be observed that each ring includes everything that has gone before, plus something more.

Thus also in revelation there is historic progressiveness. Each new stage in revelation takes up into itself all that has gone before plus something more. God's revelation was constantly enriched until the facts on which redemption is based had been completed and explained. Then God's revelation in its objective sense was brought to a close. The objection that has been raised against this progressive character of God's revelation is without ground. It has been urged against it that this excludes the absolute perfection of God's word. Dr. Vos says of this, "The organic progress is from seed-form to the attainment of full growth; yet we do not say that in the qualitative sense the seed is less perfect than the tree. The feature in question explains further how the soteric sufficiency of the truth could belong to it in its first state of emergence. In the seed form the minimum of the indispensable was already present. Again it explains how revelation could be so closely determined in its onward movement by the onward movement of redemption. The latter being organically-progressive, the

former had to partake of the same nature. Where redemption takes slow steps, revelation proceeds accordingly. We can observe that where great epoch-making redemptive acts accumulate, there the movement of revelation is correspondingly accelerated and its volume increased." The special revelation of God to man is therefore as a tree of which the roots, trunk and branches are organically related to one another; or it may be compared to a human body with its various members, but still forming one organic whole. Our Lord tells us that "Scripture cannot be broken." One part of God's revelation has direct bearing upon the other part. Revelation is, as every thorough student of the Book knows, simply the ripened fruit of Genesis.

THE "SEVEN DISPENSATIONS"

With all this the Present-day Dispensationalism is at variance. Instead of one organic revelation of the plan of salvation, an entirely new system of Scripture interpretation has been substituted. They have divided God's dealings with the world into periods of time, called "Dispensations." In the Scofield Bible we are informed that "in each dispensation God deals with man upon a plan different from the plan of the other dispensation. Each dispensation is a thing entirely apart from the other, and, when one period succeeds another, there is a radical change of character and governing principles." The present period, for example, is called the Dispensation of Grace. This is entirely different from the former "Dispensation of the Law." They tell us that there is no law in the gospel "Dispensation of Grace" and no grace in the Old Testament "Dispensation of the Law."

The whole period of God's dealing with the world is artificially divided into seven periods or so-called dispensations. Why the number seven should be used here is difficult to understand, unless it is for the reason that it is the Biblical number that expresses the idea of sacred perfection. This reason alone surely cannot warrant its use in this connection.

According to the Scofield Bible, the first period before the fall marks the "Dispensation of Innocency."

This is followed by the time intervening between the fall and the flood which is designated as "The Dispensation of Conscience." No scriptural proof is given to show that this time must especially be characterized as that of conscience.

After that we meet with the third period which is called the "Dispensation of Human Government." This dates from the deluge to the call of Abraham. Again no reason is found for this special designation. If this had been applied to the Mosaic time, there would at least have been a semblance of truth in it, as that was the era of law-giving and ceremonies.

The fourth dispensation extends from the call of Abraham to the giving of the law at Mount Sinai and is termed the "Dispensation of Promise." There were of course special promises given at this time but these are essentially the same as the all-embracing promise of Genesis 3:15 that was given immediately after the entrance of sin.

After the "Dispensation of Promise" we come to the notorious "Dispensation of the Law." This begins with Moses and continues through the major part of Christ's earthly ministry. The gospels belong primarily to the era of the law instead of that of grace. We are left entirely without information as to how this is possible in the light of Jesus' teaching that the law and the prophets were until John, and since that time the Kingdom of Heaven is preached. We also read that "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

The sixth period in this scheme is called the "Dispensation of Grace." It continues from the closing days of the Lord's earthly ministry till the second coming of Christ. During all this time the church is entirely free from the law and lives exclusively in the realm of grace. At the close of this sixth period the long desired millennium reign will finally be introduced.

These seven dispensations as they are described above are all distinctively separated from each other. We read that "Each dispensation is a thing entirely apart from the others and when one period succeeds the other there is a

radical change of character and governing principles," (Scofield Bible).

All this is not only contrary to the biblical meaning of the term "dispensation," but also contradicts the organic development of God's revelation as well as the profound unity which exists throughout the whole Scripture.

GOD'S GREAT PLAN OF SALVATION THROUGH COVENANT

Over against these various dispensations in God's dealings with men stands the clear Biblical doctrine of salvation through the Covenant of Grace of which the revelation is organic as well as progressive. There is no salvation outside of this convenant. All God's dealings with men have had a covenant character. He is called the Father of the Everlasting Covenant and it hath pleased Him to arrange it, that He will not deal with us except through a covenant, nor can we deal with Him except in the same manner. Adam in the garden was under a covenant with God and God was in covenant with him. This agreement which is known as the Covenant of Works was speedily broken. This covenant with the first Adam as the federal head and natural father of the human race is succeeded by the Covenant of Grace which is made with Christ, the second Adam, as the covenant head of God's chosen people. The blood of Christ is called "the blood of the everlasting covenant." The gracious covenant relationship between man and God is again established in Him. We know that we are not God's children unless we are first in the covenant which Christ has sealed with His precious blood. It is the only ladder that reaches from heaven to earth, and it is the only way in which God has special communion with us and in which we in turn can deal with God as our Father. The term "covenant" occurs thirty-three times in the New Testament alone. This repeated occurrence indicates that it embodies an idea of primary importance. It also occupies the first place in the Old Testament revelation. The religion of the Bible is decidedly a covenant religion, and all God's dealings with His people are governed by its principles.

Meaning of "Covenant"

Since it is of supreme importance for us to have a proper understanding of the Covenant of Grace, let us first answer the question, what is meant by the term covenant. This English word comes from the two Latin words CON VENIRE which means "coming together." CON is the Latin word for "together" or "with" and VENIRE means "to come." The English word "covenant" therefore is a "coming together." This indicates a very close agreement. The same thought is expressed from the Holland word "verbond" and the German word "Bund." The Dutch "verbond" comes from the word "verbinden" which means to tie together. The Greek word for covenant is DIATHEKE, which means to "place" or "put together." The Hebrew word for covenant is B'RITH. It occurs two hundred and eighty times in the Old Testament and is generally considered to mean "cut," "choose," or "separate."

The Covenant of Grace is the gracious agreement between God and His people whereby God promises them complete Salvation in the way of faith, and they accept this in faith.

We may say in general that the term covenant designated a very intimate agreement between two parties. The apostle Paul speaks of this relationship as a marriage union. It is a very wonderful thing that God should enter into a marriage contract with His people; but He has done so. When Paul speaks of this covenant relationship existing between God and the Church in Christ, he says, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh," and then he adds, "this mystery is great: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church." This means that Christ has so joined Himself with His people as the bridegroom is joined with the bride. The church fathers were right when they said "He who knows how to pronounce the word covenant is on the road toward being a thorough theologian."

Salvation by a covenant! The thought is charming for we were lost by a covenant. Father Adam represented the whole human race in the Covenant of Works. Had Adam

kept the covenant he and all his children would have been blessed. Alas, our foundation was too frail. Adam fell and the whole human race fell with him. Some have inquired, "Is it just?" Do not raise the question for it is the only way of Redemption. The devils when they fell, fell each one for himself, and so they could never rise again; but we fell by our representative. Here then was the way to restore us again. As we sinned representatively it was also possible for us to satisfy the law by a representative. Here was the opening for the way of salvation! By a second covenant head man can be redeemed, and therefore Jesus Christ comes as the second Adam and God makes the covenant with Him. O, matchless mystery of Divine love and mercy! (Cf. Sp. on Cov.)

THREE USES OF COVENANT IN THE BIBLE

The covenant of Grace appears in three different senses in the Bible. Sometimes one meaning is on the foreground and then again another. The true sense in each individual case can be determined by the context. The three uses are: (1) As a divine disposition. When it appears in this sense the sovereignty of God is especially emphasized. (2) Relationship of mutual fellowship. This idea is expressed in the English word covenant (means to come together). (3) Covenant also is used to mean TESTAMENT. "There are sufficient indications to enable us to affirm that the three senses, 'Covenant' (Relationship of mutual fellowship), 'Authoritative disposition' and 'Testament' are all represented in the New Testament vocabulary," (Vos, Pamphlet on Hebrews, p. 606).

(1) Covenant A Divine Authoritative Disposition

Scripture everywhere teaches us that the "essential element (in the covenant) is the absolute confirmation of the arrangement by means of a religious sanction or ceremony; in other words it is the introduction of the divine factor securing stability that gives to the Berith (covenant) its specific character," (Vos, Hebrews, P. 597). We must always remember that the covenant of Grace comes to us with the seal of divine

authority. Just because of that factor it is absolutely stable and secure. The religious ceremony that is always connected with the establishment of the covenant contains this meaning.

(a) When the covenant was established with Abraham we find, therefore, that it was solemnly ratified. In Genesis 15 we read that Abraham, at God's command, takes a sacrifice of a heifer and a she-goat and a ram and a turtle dove and a young pigeon, and divided them in the midst and laid each half over against the other. "And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold, a smoking furnace, and a flaming torch that passed between these pieces. And in that day Jehovah made a covenant with Abraham . . . " (Gen. 15: 17, 18). This solemn ceremony made the arrangement inviolable and gave it a covenantal character. This rendered it *sure*.

(b) This side of the covenant already finds expression in the original Greek word that is used for it, DIATHEKE. This is a derivative from DIATITHESTHAI (middle voice). The verb means "To order for one's self" or "To dispose for one's self," (Cf. Vos Hebrews, P. 591). Since the original etymological meaning is "a person's free disposition in his own interest" it expresses primarily the idea of Divine sovereignty. To say that God is sovereign in the establishment of His covenant is to ascribe to Him the prerogative to determine and regulate the redemptive relation that shall exist between Him and His people. He determines this according to His sovereign good pleasure and entirely without human interference. It is true that in its further development the mutual relationship gradually comes into existence in this covenant, nevertheless the divine sovereignty is always strictly maintained.

Even though the covenant contains two contracting parties, it must be well understood: (a) God initiates the Covenant, and it is Divine in its origin; (b) God has the right to determine its contents; (c) God does not bargain with man as to the terms of the covenant which He condescends to make with him since such a thought is unworthy of God and derogatory to His nature.

The absolute sovereignty of God is already evident at the time of its formal establishment with Abraham when God

says, "I will make My covenant etc." It is God who makes the covenant and voluntarily enters into this solemn relationship with His people.

This Divine sovereignty is also expressed in II Cor. 3. "Here the two dispensations are compared. The old covenant is the system of legal administration, it issues into bondage, condemnation and death. The new covenant is the system of spiritual procreation and endowment prevailing through Christ; it produces liberty, righteousness and life," (Vos. Hebrews, P. 610). The covenant idea is used to bring out how God sovereignly sets in motion and carries out all that is necessary to obtain the religious end.

In the letter to the Hebrews we also read of God's sovereignty. This can especially be seen in the doxology in chap. 13:20, 21. "It is the God who omnipotently brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus, with the blood of the eternal Diatheke (Covenant), who also makes the believers perfect in every good thing to do His will, working in them that which is pleasing in His sight. Here we see how the thought of divine initiative and energizing flows together with the covenant-idea," (Cf. Vos Hebrews, P. 620).

(2) Covenant the Relationship of Mutual Fellowship Between God and Man

This thought of fellowship is contained in our English word covenant which literally means "to come together."

This is the underlying idea in the word "Covenant" when Jesus says "This is the new covenant of my blood." "The true interpretation of the Lord's supper is that it appears as a sacrificial meal to which His death forms a part" (Vos, Hebrews, P. 607). The essential thought in the Old Testament passover was that of communion between God and His people. This communion is broken by sin. Therefore the Passover blood was first applied before the lamb was eaten. The eating of the Passover lamb symbolized the fellowship between God and Israel. This is also the meaning of the Lord's supper. The blood of Jesus is compared to the sacrificial blood of the Old Testament. The new covenant is su-

perior to the old because it brings about a closer fellowship between God and His people. Through the blood of Christ is the forgiveness of sins and this is the new basis of intercourse between God and His own. After the sins are forgiven, communion is restored.

The thought of covenant-fellowship is very strikingly brought out in the letter to the Hebrews, which has been called "the Epistle of the Covenant." The sole purpose of God's revelation to man is to establish and perfect this fellowship. In former times he spake through the prophets, we are told, and in the last days through His son. This is the highest revelation and superlative degree of fellowship conceivable between God and His people. In Heb. 13:20 we read of "the blood of the everlasting covenant." Here the covenant is called the everlasting covenant, because in it the whole work of redemption reaches its final goal. The purpose of God's revelation and the whole work of redemption is to restore the broken communion between God and man. The blood of Jesus is the blood of the everlasting covenant because it restores the fellowship that was cut off by sin. "In the covenant the whole religious process comes to rest, for the predicate "everlasting" in Hebrews expresses not only endless duration, but inclusion among the eternal realities which have absolute value and significance in themselves, (Vos, Hebrews, P. 620). In this covenant of Grace the believer enjoys a foretaste of the heavenly bliss. The heavenly comes down to earth and with the Apostle he declares that already here he rejoices with a joy unspeakable and full of glory. Already in this world the heavenly fellowship is restored.

In all this we see that the essential idea that underlies the whole covenant conception is that of fellowship and communion between God and His people. This is the very essence of the covenant of grace. The covenant is not only a means to attain this end, but it is the end itself. It is not only a means to establish this fellowship, but it is fellowship. Therefore, the Christian who is in this covenant is in a semi-eschatological state. Heaven has come down to him in prin-

ciple, because the heavenly relationship between the Christian and God is restored in its beginning.

"To be a Christian is to live one's life, not merely in dependence on God, nor even merely for the sake of God; it is to stand in conscious, reciprocal fellowship with God, to be identified with Him in thought and purpose and work, to receive from Him and give back to Him in the ceaseless interplay of spiritual forces. It is this direct confrontation of the religious mind with God which finds in the covenant idea its perfect expression. To be in covenant with God,—what finer and what more adequate definition of the perfect religious life can be conceived than this? The classical formula in which already under the Old Testament God Himself expresses His conception of the covenant and which through Jeremiah has descended to our author (Letter to Hebrews) reads: 'I shall be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people' and 'All shall know me from the least to the greatest.' . . . The highest concrete analogy for this is that offered by the prophet Hosea when he compares the covenant between Jehovah and the people to the marriage-bond between husband and wife, which when perfect leaves no room for divided interests and possessions. Some of the psalms also reach the same high altitude where the soul rises above every thought of self, even above the consciousness of its own need of Salvation, and desires and receives God for His own sake," (Vos, Hebrews, P. 623).

(3) Testamental Nature of This Covenant

The Greek word for covenant is also sometimes translated as testament. At times it is even difficult to determine whether it is to be translated covenant or testament. In Hebrews 9 there can be no question about it, since the context clearly shows that here it has the meaning of testament. Therefore, the question comes, what is a testament? This answer will also show us the meaning of covenant since the two are used interchangeably in the Bible, (Hebrews). We are all acquainted with the meaning of a testament that is made by the parents before their death.

It is first of all a LEGAL DOCUMENT between the parents and their children. So also this testament or covenant of grace is a legal agreement between God and the believers and their children in which God promises eternal life. The Bible is divided into the Old and New Testament,—this, however does not mean that we have two entirely different testaments. There is only one testament or covenant. It is called Old Testament because it belongs to the first dispensation and designated as New Testament as belonging to the second dispensation. There is however no essential difference between the Old and New Testament.

A testament becomes *valid* at the time the testament-maker dies. After the death of the parents such a document cannot be changed. This is exactly what happened with the Covenant of Grace. Christ, the testator, says the apostle, died, and thus sealed the covenant with His own blood. Hebrews 9:16 "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator lives."

A testament is also *one-sided* as to its origin. The same must be said of the Covenant of Grace. God does not say to Abraham, "Come Abraham let us make the covenant together." That would be just as unnatural a procedure as if the parents would say to their children, "Come children let us draw up the testament." In Genesis 17 we read repeatedly that God Himself made the covenant with Abraham, "And I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee" (Gen. 17:7).

In an ordinary testament we also distinguish between *ownership* and *possession.* The children of the family are included in the testament of their parents. This means that they are heirs of the parents' possession, and it gives them the right of ownership but does not indicate actual possession. After the death of the parents the child can refuse his share of the inheritance bequeathed to him in the testament. The child then breaks the testament of his parents. So also the covenant

children can show by words and actions that they refuse to accept the inheritance promised them by God in this testament or covenant of grace. This deprives them of possessing the covenant blessings. The covenant child can thus become a covenant breaker by a willful, ungodly life.

As in a testament the children become heirs of the inheritance entirely because of the good will of the parents so also in the covenant. They do not merit the testament privileges through their own efforts. This is even more true in the Covenant of Grace. We receive this inheritance only because of the grace of God.

> "O, to grace how great a debtor,
> Daily I'm constrained to be
> Let Thy goodness like a fetter,
> Bind my wandering heart to Thee!"

With Whom Is the Covenant of Grace Made

The Covenant of Works was made with Adam as the representative of the human race. Through the fall, Adam and all his posterity were brought to a state of condemnation and misery out of which they cannot redeem themselves. Upon the question of the Heidelberg Catechism, "Are all men then, as they perished in Adam, saved by Christ?" The answer is "No; only those who are ingrafted into Him, and receive all His benefits, by a true faith." This solemn contract is therefore not made with the world. The atonement of Jesus is particular and extends only to the elect. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, because He shall save *His* people from their sins." The blood of Jesus was not shed for the lost in perdition. The vicarious atonement was only brought for the true believers. This does not mean that Christ's sacrifice was not sufficient for the whole world. The ransom was brought by an infinite person and consequently merits an infinite value. The suffering and death of Christ is certainly sufficient for the whole world, but it is efficient only for God's people.

With whom is the covenant made? In its narrower sense it is made between God the Father and Christ as the Head of the spiritual body, which is the true church. In its wider sense

the covenant is made with the Triune God and the believers and their seed.

(a) The former relationship can be designated as a community of life. The believers are viewed as members of Christ's mystical body and partakers of His benefits. It expresses the vital union that exists between Christ and the believers. This is brought out by the analogies of "the vine and the branches," "the shepherd and flock," "husband and wife," "head and body," etc.

(b) The covenant relationship however also appears in the Scripture in the second or more general sense. The entire relationship between God and Israel is designated as a covenant relationship. In the Old Testament God is designated as the Father of His people Israel. In Genesis XVII we already read that God not only made the covenant with Abraham but also with his seed. At Pentecost the apostle Peter refers to this promise when he proclaims to the Jews: "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call," Acts 2:39. Paul tells us that Abraham is the father of all believers. This Covenant of Grace was first formally established with Abraham and his seed. The New Testament everywhere identifies the Christian Church with the true Israel of the Old Testament. The believers are therefore called the children of Abraham. In its wider application the covenant is therefore made between God and the believers and their children. As in the Old Testament God promised to be the God of Abraham and his seed, so also now God says to the believing parents and their children, "I will be Thy God." This means, according to our form of baptism, that God promises to be our Father Who will provide us with every good and avert all evil or turn it to our profit; that Christ the Son will graciously incorporate us into the fellowship of His death and resurrection; and that the Holy Ghost assures us that He will dwell in us and sanctify us to be members of Christ, applying unto us, that which we have in Christ, namely, the washing away of our sins and the daily renewing of our lives. This is generally called the legal relationship. In this wider sense

the covenant of Grace is not limited to the elect, since among the children of believers we may also find the covenant breakers. The ungodly children even though they may be born of pious parents were never elected to the eternal salvation by the Everlasting Father.

ORGANIC PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE

The Covenant of Grace is based upon another solemn agreement which is commonly known as The Council of Peace or The Covenant of Redemption. This eternal covenant was made between the three persons of the Holy Trinity before time began. And here let us speak with reverence, for we are about to enter a solemn subject. It has been revealed to us that before the time of creation the Almighty held a sacred conclave with Himself; Father, Son and Holy Ghost held a mystic council with each other as to what they were about to do. That council, though we do not read much of it in the Scriptures, was most certainly held. We have abundant traces of it, and even though it is obscured because of the effulgence of the glory to which no man can approach and therefore cannot be defined didactically as is the case with other doctrines, yet there are repeated references made throughout the whole Scriptures to this council between the three glorious persons of the Trinity. Christ then took upon himself the great work of Redemption and God in turn promised Him the Messianic glory as His eternal reward. In the high-priestly prayer recorded in John XVII Jesus speaks of the Glory given to Him by the Father over all flesh that he should give eternal life to all that were given Him of the Father. He also speaks of the finished task which he had undertaken in this eternal council of Peace. In the closing book of the Bible we read of the Lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world. This Eternal Covenant of Redemption is the sure foundation upon which the Covenant of Grace is built. For this reason the blood of Jesus is called "the blood of the everlasting covenant," cf. Spurgeon.

The second Adam entered into covenant with God some-

what after this fashion:—The Father says, I give thee a people; they shall be thine: thou must die to redeem them, and when thou hast done this,—when for their sakes thou hast kept my law, and made it honourable, when for their sakes thou hast borne my wrath against their transgressions, —then I will bless them; they shall be my people; I will forgive their iniquities; I will change their natures; I will sanctify them, and make them perfect. There was an apparent "if" in this covenant at the first. That "if" hinged upon the question whether the Lord Jesus would obey the law, and pay the ransom; a question which his faithfulness placed beyond doubt. There is no "if" in it now. When Jesus bowed his head, and said, "It is finished," there remained no "if" in the covenant. It stands, therefore, now as a covenant entirely of one side,—a covenant of promises, of promises which must be kept, because the other portion of the covenant having been fulfilled, the Father's side of it must stand. He cannot, and he will not, draw back from the doing of that which he covenanted with Christ to do. The Lord Jesus shall receive the joy which was set before him. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." By his knowledge shall the Christ who became God's righteous Servant justify many, for hath he not borne their iniquities? How can it be otherwise than that they should be accepted for whom he was the Surety? Do you see why it is that the covenant, as I have read it, stands so absolutely without "ifs," "buts," and "peradventures," and runs only on "shalls" and "wills"? It is because the one side of it that did look uncertain was committed into the hand of Christ, who cannot fail or be discouraged. He has completed his part of it, and now it stands fast, and must stand fast for ever and ever. This is the absolute and certain foundation upon which the Covenant of Grace is based. (Cf. Spurgeon on Cov.)

This Covenant of Grace which is so absolutely certain is the only way by which God designs to save man.

FIRST REVELATION OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE

The first positive revelation of this covenant of Grace is found in Gen. 3:15. Here God again places Himself on the side of fallen man and assures his people of the final victory over the Devil and his whole dominion. A few things demand our consideration here. This text first of all speaks of the perpetual enmity that exists between the church and the world. This is there because God willed it so. He placed the enmity there Himself.

Notice also that Satan, the old Dragon, will bruise the heel of the Saviour. But by doing this he himself receives the death-blow. The absolute conquest of the Son of Man over the powers of darkness is attained by suffering. Christ's triumph over the Evil One is foretold by the words, "It shall bruise thy head." This translation is not entirely correct. Our Holland version is far more like the original. It reads, "datzelve zal u den kop vermorzelen." The Hebrew word literally means "to crush" which is much stronger than "to bruise."

This grand prophecy attained its partial fulfillment with the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ and will reach its complete accomplishment at the time of Jesus' second coming which brings the final defeat of the last enemy.

THE TIME OF NOAH

The Covenant of Grace again makes its appearance at the time of Noah immediately after the flood. God promised that He would never again smite the world with the flood and that "while the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." This promise of the Covenant of Nature is confirmed by the sign of the rainbow. This agreement with Nature even though it is different from the Covenant of Grace, is nevertheless closely related to it. The two covenants stand in vital connection with each other. Upon the enquiry as to why God promises to maintain the whole creation until the

end of time so that it shall not again be destroyed, the Bible answers that it is because of His church. When the church has been fully gathered from every clime the world will come to its final end. Peter informs us that this time it shall not be destroyed by water but by fire. Then there shall be a new heaven and a new earth. This covenant of Nature contained the prediction of the final re-establishment of the entire creation of God. The Covenant of Grace is therefore realized through the covenant with Nature.

TIME OF ABRAHAM

This Covenant of Grace is again placed upon the foreground at the time of Abraham. The patriarch was called away from his father's house so that God could establish this Covenant with him and his children. This is the first formal establishment of this Covenant which as we have seen was already revealed in the maternal promise immediately after the fall. God now gives Abraham the covenant sign and seal which was circumcision. In Gen. xvii we read, "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee. To this Covenant promise the apostle Peter refers when he says, "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." The progressive development of the whole covenant way of Salvation is clearly unfolded in God's word. How is it possible for the Chiliasts to maintain that each succeeding period of God's dealings with the world is entirely different from the other, in the light of all that which has been said. The grand and profound unity that exist throughout the entire Bible is self-evident.

The objection of the extreme Premillennialist that the covenant made with Abraham is entirely identical with the national covenant with Israel and has nothing whatsoever to do with the New Testament church, is completely without foundation in the Scripture. How the Premillennialists can come to such a conclusion is inconceivable. We readily grant

that in the Old Testament church and state are together. Circumcision also meant for the pious Israelite that he was a member of the common-wealth; but to say that this exhausts the meaning of this sacrament and the covenant of which it is both sign and seal is indeed doing violence to the most plain and didactic truths of the Bible which because of their perspicuity exclude a double interpretation.

REASONS WHY ABRAHAMIC COVENANT IS NOT EXCLUSIVELY NATIONAL

(1) Let it be recollected here that Israel as a nation was not organized until the time of Moses which is almost four hundred years after this covenant was formally established. How farfetched to say that God made the minutest provisions for this purely national covenant four hundred years before its accomplishment!

(2) A still more serious objection must be raised at this point. To say that the primary promise to Abraham is contained in the announcement that he would be the father of a great nation, is, to say the least, a lamentable under emphasis of the spiritual significance of the transaction in question. This is altogether too crude a conception of the passage under consideration. The superlative promise to the Patriarch is contained in the words, "to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee." This assurance contains all the future benefits of the Covenant of Grace. The promise of regeneration, conversion, forgiveness of sins, eternal life and all the other blessings are embodied in this statement. To refer this exclusively to the national Israel is to take the very heart out of this beautiful Bible passage.

(3) Furthermore, it must not be overlooked that the sign and seal of this covenant with Abraham was circumcision. This sacrament means far more than being only a badge of membership in the common-wealth of the national Israel. In God's revelation we often read of the true significance of this sacrament. The first emphasis does not fall upon the outward ritual but rather the removal of the unclean which symbolically sets forth the cleansing from sin. This spiritual meaning of

circumcision is repeatedly mentioned in both Old and New Testament. The primary significance of circumcision is not national but spiritual.

(4) In this connection we must also mention that circumcision was to Abraham a seal of the righteousness of faith. The righteousness of faith denotes two things. One is, the faith itself is counted for righteousness. The other is the righteousness in the proper sense which springs from faith. I consider that the former sense is correct here. For it is said that he received this seal that he might be the father of all them that believe, whether circumcised or uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed or counted unto them also; in other words, that their faith might be counted unto them for righteousness even as his was. If this explanation be admitted; circumcision is here styled the seal of the faith of Abraham; that is, it was a seal put upon Abraham, as a believer, by the appointment of God. We ask, how can all this receive its proper explanation when the extreme Premillennialist limits this entire divine transaction between God and Abraham to Israel as an earthly nation? How is it possible, we ask, for any serious student of God's Word to deny the underlying spiritual import of circumcision as it is repeatedly found in God's Word? We again want to stress the Scriptural fact that the Covenant that was formally set up with Abraham is identical with the Covenant first revealed in Paradise and long afterwards spoken of by Peter as containing the promise of eternal salvation, "Unto you and to your children."

To say with the Scofield Bible that the Abrahamic period is exclusively a dispensation of human government and has nothing to do with that which precedes and follows is doing an injustice to Scripture that cannot be excused. Such a method of Scripture interpretation breaks the organic unity of God's special revelation concerning the plan of salvation.

MOSAIC PERIOD

This same Covenant of Grace which is founded upon the eternal Council of Peace, which was first revealed in Genesis 3:15, and was formally established with the patriarch Abra-

ham is thereafter continued during the time of Moses. To say that this was the "Dispensation of Law" in such a way that it stands independently by itself, separated from the foregoing development of the whole salvation plan, is another serious error which is surrounded by the most grave consequences.

When God called Moses at the burning bush He designated Himself as the "I AM THAT I AM." The "I AM" designates the Lord as the unchangeable Covenant God. He is now about to fulfill the promise made to Abraham in respect to the promised land. The very name "I AM" by which God calls Himself already shows the continuity of the Covenant of which we are speaking. The Covenant at Mount Sinai is essentially the same as that which was first revealed in Paradise and later continued with Abraham. To say with the present day Millennialism that the Mosaic Dispensation must be characterized as the Dispensation under the Law from which Grace is entirely excluded, is doing an injustice to this part of God's revelation of the plan of salvation. When John writes in his gospel, "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," he certainly did not intend to convey the idea that the Gospel Dispensation introduced by Jesus is apart from the law, and that the Mosaic Dispensation contains no grace. The emphasis of the Mosaic period was upon the law, but this was done with the most gracious design. The laws given to Israel at this time served a two-fold purpose: to be a guide and rule of life and to be a tutor to bring them to Christ. The gracious purpose of God was to educate His people in order that they might see the supreme need of the promised Messiah. God's law was given to them that they might be brought to the knowledge of their own guilt and sin. The Ten Commandments were given to convict them of their transgressions, so that they might eagerly look forward to the promised Deliverer. The carnal minded Israelite failed to see the purpose of God. Instead of producing a deep spiritual longing for Christ's coming, the law had the opposite effect. It stimulated their self-righteousness. The Jews turned away from God to legalism and external piety. This however

is not the fault of God. God's purpose was to bring Israel to repentance.

The law was a manifestation of God's grace to Israel and beneficial in many ways. It gave them the true understanding of God as He is known in His peerless attributes of justice and mercy. The Ten Commandments came with rigid demands of strict obedience and the Ceremonial Laws taught Israel the mercy of God in that they through the bloody sacrifices were a means to educate them concerning the atonement for sins. In giving them the sanctuary, priesthood, sacrifices and altar, God promised to receive them as His peculiar treasure, Ex. 19:4ff, and that they would be unto Him "a kingdom of priests and an holy nation," upon the reasonable condition that they would obey His voice and keep His covenant. Surely this may be called the supreme manifestation of Divine grace to the children of Jacob.

When Paul asks the question what advantage has the Jew above the Gentile nations, he furnishes us with the inspired answer, "Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God," Rom. 3:2. This certainly was a sign of the good pleasure of God toward His Covenant people.

The Mosaic time was therefore the dispensation of God's grace that was manifested in the giving of the law with the blessed purpose of preparing Israel for the coming Redeemer. In this way there is a continued development of the same Covenant first revealed in Genesis 3:15 and thereafter formally established with Abraham. Especially the Ceremonial Law gave Israel a better understanding of the promised atonement, which was first predicted in the maternal promise of Genesis 3. Israel must know that all the sacrifices and symbols of the Mosaic period will reach their final consummation in the cross of Christ.

PERIOD WHEN O. T. PROPHECIES CLOSED

In his pamphlet on the Millennium Prof. Berkhof calls our attention to a three-fold development in the closing prophecies of the Old Testament. (1) In the first place they point

to the time in which the particularism of the Old Testament will fall away and make room for the universalism of the New Dispensation. Redemption shall no longer be limited to Israel, but from henceforth the whole world shall share in the covenant blessings. (2) In the second place we notice that the later prophets emphasize the religion of the individual more than that of the nation as a whole. The personal responsibility is especially placed upon the foreground. (3) And finally the prophets predict that the external ceremonial character of religion shall become spiritual and internal. All this has reached its fulfillment in the New Testament. The progressive character of the organic redemptive work is plainly revealed.

NEW TESTAMENT DISPENSATION

This same Covenant of Grace which is first mentioned in Genesis 3 and further developed as we have seen with Abraham and Moses, reaches its final stage of fulfillment in the New Testament Dispensation. Because of this the New Testament period is frequently designated as the last times. Cf. Heb. 1:1. The New Testament era is far superior to the Old Testament dispensation of the Law. Jesus speaks of His sacrifice as the "blood of the New Testament," and the apostle writes to the Hebrews that He is the "Mediator of the new Covenant." The letter to the Hebrews emphasizes its superiority. The old Covenant is spoken of as that "which decayeth and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away." The new covenant is far more glorious than the old.

NEW DISPENSATION SUPERIOR TO THE OLD

There is abundant evidence that this New Testament Covenant does not differ from the Old Testament Covenant in essence. Essentially they are the same. Yet it is far superior in many respects. (1) The privileges and blessings of the New Testament Dispensation are much greater than those of the Old Testament, since the Old Testament contained the prophecy but the New Testament the glorious realization, (Heb. 1:1). The Old Testament contains the form, but the

New Testament the reality. The Old Covenant has the shadow, but the New Covenant the substance. Herein do the believers rejoice with an unspeakable joy. The Old Testament tabernacle was made with hands. It was the tent in which God dwelt, where God manifested His presence to man and man in turn communed with God. To use Matthew Henry's words, it was the "Trysting Place" between the Creator and the worshipper. Here God and man met each other through the slaughter of the bullock by which the reconciliation was effected. In the New Testament Dispensation "The Word became flesh and TABERNACLED among us." Instead of the wilderness tabernacle which contained the Law, we have the Immanuel; that is, God with us in Christ Jesus tabernacling or dwelling among us. The law was given by Moses but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. The eternal Word is full of both grace and truth. Of grace in that it contains the superlative manifestation of God's mercy bestowed upon the children of men; and of truth because Christ is the perfect revelation of the Father. He is the effulgence of His glory and the express image of His substance.

(2) Instead of limiting this Divine grace to the Children of Israel as was done on the former dispensation, it now comes to the whole world and may be characterized as universal. The universality of the Covenant of Grace was already foretold to Abraham. God said to him, "Thou shalt be a father of many nations." The prophet Isaiah speaks of the suffering Christ as One that "shall sprinkle many nations." The particularism of the Old Testament was never intended as something permanent. Even in the Old Testament some of the Gentiles shared in the blessings of the Covenant. Jonah was sent to preach the gospel to Nineveh.

(3) In the New Testament Dispensation the first emphasis is placed upon the gracious character of the Covenant. Because of this Paul connects it with the Abrahamic Covenant rather than with the Covenant of Sinai, Rom. 4 and Gal. 3. This however does not mean that the law is entirely excluded in the New Testament Dispensation. When Paul contrasts the ministry of the law with that of the gospel he referred to the

law as it was understood by the Jews of his time who regarded the Sinaitic Covenant as a Covenant of Works. Paul here rebukes the legalism of the Jews.

(4) Finally, the New Testament Dispensation conveys richer blessings than the Old Testament Dispensation. The Old Testament points forward to Christ's cross; the New Testament speaks of the accomplished event. The Old Testament predicts the coming of the Spirit, whereas the New Testament records His gracious outpouring. This present New Testament Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace will continue until the coming of Jesus Christ. Then the covenant relationship will attain its fullest realization in a life of intimate communion with God. "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." (Rev. 21:3).

THIS COVENANT OF GRACE IS THE SAME IN ALL DISPENSATIONS

(1) The idea of the organic unity of the Covenant finds expression throughout the whole Scripture. In God's progressive revelation every forward step is immediately linked up with that which precedes. In the letter to the Galatians Paul corrects the views of the Judaists of his time. He argues that the Gentile Christians belong to the same covenant that was made with Abraham the father of all believers. The organic unity between the Old Testament Church and the New Testament Church is clearly expressed. This unity may not be disregarded as is done by the Chiliasts. "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham," Gal. 3:8, 9.

(2) The New Testament Covenant of Grace is also immediately connected with the Old Testament Covenant in the song of Mary, "And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. He hath holpen his servant Israel,

in remembrance of his mercy; As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever," Luke 1: 50, 54, 55.

(3) The identity of the New Testament Church and the Old Testament believers is also spoken of by Peter in the book of Acts, "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed."

(4) We also read that the covenant promises of both dispensations are identical. The promised blessing to Abraham, "to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee" contains the whole summary of the New Testament benefits. All the covenant blessings that are mentioned in the New Testament are embraced in that all-comprehensive statement which is found in Genesis 17.

(5) The unity of the New Testament Church with that of the Old is also brought out in the Biblical word that is used for "church." The Greek word EKKLESIA designates the Church as those "called out" of the world. The Church is not part of the world but is separated from it. This same thought is contained in Genesis 3: 15 when God speaks of the enmity that shall exist between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. It is also expressed in the call of Abraham in the Ur of Chaldees as well as in the exodus of Israel out of the land of Egypt and their dwelling together in the land of Canaan. Israel's sin was that it failed to extenuate the Philistine tribes, and so failed to carry out the Divine purpose of living apart from the world. The Hebrews were called out of the nations of the earth to be a peculiar people of God. They constituted His Church in the Old Testament. To them were committed the oracles of God. They received the blessings of adoption as children of God together with the covenant promises. They were called out of the world for a church purpose; namely, to be witnesses of God among the nations. The ocice-bearers of the Old Testament, prophets, priests and kings were appointed by God and were considered His servants. Dr. Hodge says, "There is no authorized definition of the Church which does not include the people of God under the Mosaic Law."

(6) The Old Testament Church and the New Testament Church are one olive tree. "If," says the apostle, "the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee." In this passage it is clear that the Church is considered as an olive tree of which Abraham is the root, and the Jewish members the natural branches; and some of these branches were broken off. The Gentile members were originally the branches of a wild olive, and were grafted in among the remaining natural branches, that is, the existing Jewish members. The Gentiles thus became joint partakers with them of the root and fatness of the olive tree. In no manner could the Apostle Paul have more decisively declared the unity of the Church under these two dispensations. (Cf. Dwight.)

(7) That the Church under these dispensations is but one is also evident from Eph. 2: 14, "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." In this passage, Christ is said to have broken down the partition between the Jew and Gentiles, and having become the peace of both, in that He made both one, that is one Church. But the Jews were in His Church before. The Gentiles were therefore made one with the Jews, by being received into the same Church.

(8) The sacraments of the Old Testament Dispensation are essentially the same as those of the New Testament. Circumcision as we have seen, meant far more to Israel than a sign of citizenship in the Jewish nation. It symbolically set forth the idea of cleansing and purification from sin, which is also symbolically proclaimed in Baptism. Paul informs us in Col. 2: 11, 12 that we are circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands in being buried with Jesus in baptism. Here the Old Testament sign and seal of the Covenant, which is Circumcision, is perpetuated in the New Testament sign and seal of the same Covenant, namely, in Baptism. The same is true of the Passover and Lord's Supper. The Old Testa-

ment Passover not only brought to the remembrance the deliverance from bondage, but also expressed the idea of atonement for sin in that the blood was applied with hyssop. It also symbolized the Divine communion between God and His people and the people with one another in the eating of the Paschal Lamb. This is also the essential significance of the Lord's Supper.

(9) The Scriptural means whereby we must be saved is the Gospel of Jesus Christ which is the power of God unto salvation. This is the same in both dispensations. In Galations, Paul warns against the Jewish deception that his Gospel was different from that of the Old Testament. "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed," Gal. 1:6, 7, 8.

(10) There is but one Mediator for the New Testament Church and for the Old. There is likewise but one Name by which we can be saved and that is the name Jesus. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today and for ever." (Heb. 13:8.). There is no other Name given under heaven whereby we must be saved than this name Jesus and neither is there any other foundation laid. The way of the Cross leads home, in the Old Testament as well as in the New. This is told us in the sacrifices and symbols of the Old Dispensation as well as in the New Testament fulfillment.

(11) God's promises to Abraham have been fully realized in the New Testament. He promised that his descendants through Isaac should be countless as the stars of heaven and above all that the seed of Abraham should be a blessing to the whole world. The blessing therefore was the blessing of redemption through Christ. It is plain that the main elements of the Covenant with Abraham are still in force. Paul says that the blessings of Abraham have come upon us. Before King Agrippa he says, "I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers, for which hope's

sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews." As the promise is the same so also the condition upon which the promise is to be obtained. The Apostle argues that men must be justified by faith because Abraham was justified by faith. He tells the Galatians "If ye be of Christ then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise."

(12) This doctrine that the New Testament Church rests upon the Covenant with Abraham is not only plainly revealed throughout the whole Scripture but is wrought into the very substance of the Gospel. It is contained in all the teachings of Jesus who said that He was not come to destroy but to fulfill and who commanded the Jews to search the Old Testament Scriptures because they testified of Him. The apostles did the same thing. The Berean Church was commended because they studied the Scriptures to see whether the doctrines of the apostles were according to their infallible standard. The messengers of Christ continually quoted the Old Testament to support their teachings.

The contention of the Premillenarians that seven such dispensations are distinguished in the Scripture (Scofield Bible, note to Gen. 1:28) and that each dispensation is "wholly complete and sufficient in itself," that it "is in no wise exchangeable for the others, and cannot be commingled" is plainly out of harmony with the organic unity of God's infallible revelation.

Chapter VI

THE REPUDIATION OF INFANT BAPTISM

We now introduce one of the most serious errors of present day Premillennialism. It is the repudiation of the doctrine of Infant Baptism. That this error is serious will appear as we believe from the contents of this chapter.

How Account for This Denial

How can we explain the denial of Infant Baptism by the Premillennialist? This question is not difficult to answer. In the foregoing chapters we have seen that the Covenant of Grace is the same throughout the whole Scripture. There is only one Covenant of Grace in both dispensations. Now, the children of believing parents were members of this Covenant in the Old Testament. This is plain from the fact that they were circumcised on the eighth day. Circumcision in the Old Testament means much more than a sign of membership in the commonwealth of Israel. It was a sign and a seal of membership in the Old Testament church as well. In fact, the first emphasis falls on the spiritual significance of the sacrament. In the New Testament dispensation baptism has taken the place of circumcision. That the children were members of the Covenant of Grace and consequently also members of the Old Testament church, is one of the foremost reasons why they must be considered as such in the New Testament dispensation. This is one of the strongest arguments for the baptism of the child. But the Premillennialist drives a wedge between the Old Testament church and the New Testament church. Says he, children were not members of the church in the Old Testament at all. Circumcision was not a sign and

seal of the spiritual Covenant of Grace. It has only a national significance. Right here is the fatal error of the whole scheme. Since circumcision had no spiritual significance in the Old Testament and since the children of believing parents were not considered as children of God in that dispensation, it is quite natural for the Chiliast to conclude that the same holds true in regard to the child in the New dispensation. Hence the children of the godly are deprived of these great benefits. The church was always mistaken in considering the child as an heir of the kingdom of God and member of the church. The child has not the right to receive the sacrament of God which signifies and seals this great blessing to it.

ARGUMENTS FOR INFANT BAPTISM

(1) COVENANT CHILDREN WERE CIRCUMCISED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT DISPENSATION, AND THEREFORE MEMBERS OF CHURCH

If it can be proven from Scripture that circumcision is a sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace in the same sense as baptism, then we must conclude that covenant children must be baptized.

We see immediately that the whole matter centers around the question whether the Old Testament dispensation must be characterized as being deeply spiritual or whether it is purely external and temporal. According to the present day Premillennialist, the Covenant that was formally established with the patriarch Abraham is exclusively national and never intended to have an abiding value for the Christian Church. Now let us see if this is true.

We are convinced that the Covenant that was formally established with Abraham is first of all a spiritual Covenant. We are ready to give our reasons:

In the Old Testament the church and state are together. Circumcision also had a national meaning. This our church has never denied. But nevertheless, the fact remains that the first and primary scriptural emphasis is not put upon the national but the spiritual. The sacraments of the Old Testament

also had a national significance, but this was always regarded in the Bible as something secondary. The state in the Old Testament is subordinate to the church. The great purpose of God with Israel was always that He might call His Church out of the world and prepare the way for the promised Messiah. The Premillennialist must prove that the Covenant of Grace in the Old Testament is exclusively national and only has value for Israel as a nation. We believe this to be an unscriptural position and affirm that the two sacraments of the Old Dispensation, namely, Circumcision and Passover, first of all have a spiritual significance, even though we do not deny their national implications. Our reasons are:

a) The sacrament of circumcision was instituted by God at the time of Abraham and not at the time of Moses. Abraham lived about four hundred years before Israel existed as a nation. The theocracy was organized at Mt. Sinai during the Mosaic period. How unreasonable is it to suppose that a sacrament with purely external significance for Israel as a nation should be called into existence four hundred years before the time.

b) The promise that is embodied in this Covenant formally established with Abraham is contained in the scriptural words, "I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee." This promise has first of all a spiritual meaning. In Hebrews 8:10 this promise implies sanctification of heart and mind. "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." When we read, "and I will be to them a god and they shall be my people," the reference is clearly to Gen. 17 where God promises this to Abraham.

The same idea of sanctification is expressed by Paul in his letter to the Corinthians. "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" II Cor. 6:16.

To say that this promise refers exclusively to Israel as a nation certainly disregards many New Testament passages that speak of the promise made to Abraham.

c) The divine prediction to Abraham has primarily also the same spiritual meaning,—"Thou shalt be the father of many nations." In Romans 8:16-18 the apostle calls the attention of his readers to this prophecy and says that it has attained its fulfillment in that Abraham is the father of believers.

d) The divine assurance "and I will give unto thee and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger," means a great deal more than the promise of an earthly Canaan. In the letter to the Hebrews we read that it means nothing short of the eternal glories of Heaven itself. "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" Heb. 11:9, 10.

e) The promised blessing contained in the words, "In thee shall all the nations be blessed" imply much more than a national and temporal prosperity limited to Israel after the flesh. In Galatians III this promise is identified with the Gospel. When God said this He proclaimed the gospel aforetime to Abraham. The apostle sums up the whole contents of the gospel to Abraham by saying, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith," Gal. 3:13.

All this shows clearly that the Covenant that was made with Abraham is intensely spiritual in its nature and essence.

(2) SPIRITUAL MEANING OF CIRCUMCISION

What was said of the Covenant of Grace with Abraham also applies to the sign and seal which God instituted at that time to confirm this covenant, namely, circumcision. The Pre-

millennialist claims that circumcision has only a national meaning.

a) The spiritual significance of circumcision is very evident from the words of Paul, "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also," Rom. 4: 11. It was through faith that Abraham is declared righteous before the tribunal of God. Surely no Chiliast will dare to rob this scripture passage of its rich spiritual value.

b) The spiritual significance of the sacrament is always placed upon the foreground by the Old Testament prophets. That which is acceptable in the sight of God is not the circumcision of the flesh alone, but rather the purification or circumcision of the heart, of which the former is only a type. The prophet Jeremiah attaches very little importance to the external ordinance. "He bluntly puts his people on the level with the Egyptians, the Edomites, the Moabites and the Ammonites in view of the fact that they were merely circumcised in the flesh and did not have the circumcision of the heart, 9: 25, 26. —Such passages as Deut. 10: 16; 30: 6; Jer. 4: 4; 9: 25; Rom. 2: 26-29 clearly point to the fact that it was in general a sign of spiritual blessings," (cf. Berkhof class notes on Infant Baptism, P. 1).

c) The Jews during the apostolic times ascribed the same meaning to this sacrament. This is clear from the fact that the Jewish Christians regarded it to be absolutely essential for salvation, Acts 15: 1.

(3) COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM IS STILL IN FORCE

The Premillennialists argue that this Covenant belongs to the Old Testament carnal dispensation and must now be regarded as obsolete. It has lost its importance for the Christian Church of to-day. With this we find serious fault. It is in conflict with many plain scripture passages.

a) In Galatians 3: 15, 16, the apostle Paul argues that

this Covenant is still in force. If a man's covenant after it has been confirmed cannot be made void, much less can this be done with the Covenant of God. "Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."

The same idea appears in Romans 4: 13ff. There the apostle argues that the law (i.e. Ten Commandments) in no way affects this covenant, neither does the law in any way annul the promise to Abraham that he would obtain righteousness through faith.

b) The author of the Hebrews refers to this Covenant as an encouragement to persevere earnestly in prayer. The readers were threatened by the twofold danger of apostasy on the one hand and a relapse into Judaism on the other. The promise to the New Testament Christian Church is the same as the promise to Abraham. This promise is certain and sure, because God hath even added to this promise an oath: "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we, (i.e., Christian Church) might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us," Heb. 6: 13 and 18.

c) That this Covenant is still in force for the New Testament believers can also be seen in the sermon of Peter on the day of Pentecost. The apostle refers exactly to the promise that was made at the time this covenant was established with Abraham and his seed. He continues by saying, "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call," Acts 2: 39. From the immediate context we learn that the promise meant is that of forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit. All this was embraced in the comprehensive promise to Abraham.

d) That this Covenant of Grace is still in force may also

be argued from the fact that this Covenant of Grace is the same throughout the ages. It is not necessary for us to repeat that which we have said in the preceding chapter. Only let us remember that this Covenant is based upon the eternal Council of Peace which is also called the Covenant of Redemption, that it was first revealed in Paradise immediately after the fall, Gen. 3:15, that it was formally set up with Abraham, continued with Moses and finally reached its perfect accomplishment in Christ. In this Covenant of Grace made with believers of both the Old Testament as well as the New, there is but one Mediator, Jesus, but one name whereby we can be saved, but one means by which the salvation is appropriated, namely, faith, and essentially the same sacraments by which that faith is strengthened. (Circumcision and Passover have essentially the same significance as Baptism and Lord's Supper.)

(4) CHILDREN MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH

That the children in Israel were members of the Old Testament church cannot be denied. By divine appointment the Old Testament children shared in all of the covenant blessings. God not only promised to be the God of Abraham but also of Abraham's seed. This is mentioned repeatedly in Genesis 17. The children not only became the recipients of the covenant blessings, but also of the covenant obligations. Wherever the Covenant of Grace is renewed in the Old Testament the children are not only mentioned but emphatically recognized. Their covenant duties are then constantly placed before them with great earnestness. Moses in his farewell address to Israel solemnly enjoins them to keep the covenant. He mentioned "the little ones" in this connection with marked emphasis. In Joshua 8:35 we read that Joshua read all that Moses had commanded before "the assembly of Israel and the women and the *little ones*."

That the children of believing parents were regarded as belonging to God's church on earth follows from the idea of church in the Old Testament. The Old Testament scriptures designate the church as "The People of God." This

people is not a general gathering of different individuals, but a peculiar people called out of the world by God Himself to be consecrated to Him and to His service. In Deut. 14:2 we read: "For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth." The same thought is carried out in the New Testament. Of John the Baptist we read that he came "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord," Lk. 1:17, and Paul writes to Titus, "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." The apostle Peter refers to Ex. 19:6 by saying, "Ye are a chosen nation, a peculiar people." Now the term "people" certainly does not mean a collection of individuals loosely connected like the sand on the seashore. On the contrary, the Church of God is an organism. Paul compares it in Romans 11 to an olive tree. The Old Testament church is the original trunk of this tree which continued in the New Testament even though some of its branches were broken off. The Gentile church is not a separate body in the new dispensation, but are branches grafted into the old tree. This proves conclusively that the church is an organism consisting of the parents with their children which is being perpetuated throughout the ages. That the Church under these two dispensations is but one, is evident also from Eph. 2:14; "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." In this passage, Christ is said to have broken down the wall of partition between the Jews and Gentiles, and, having become the peace of both, to have made both one, that is, one Church. But the Jews were in His Church before. The Gentiles were therefore made one with the Jews, by being received into the same Church. Thus, it is evident, that the Church under the Abrahamic and Christian Dispensations is the same Church. It is not possible to exclude the children from "the Holy Nation" and "the peculiar people" which God has called out of the world to constitute His Church.

Because of their exalted standing in the Church, the children were present at the religious assemblies in the Old Testament. The prophet Joel insisted that Israel should gather in a solemn assembly with their children, Joel 2: 16. The prophet Isaiah predicts that the children shall be taught of the Lord and great shall be the peace of thy children. They, says the prophet, shall be one of the blessed fruits of the covenant of grace. They were also present at the preaching of Jesus at the miracle of the Loaves and Fishes.

From all this it is clear that the children constituted a very important element in the Old Testament church. They were never regarded as being on the level with the Gentile children, but were always recognized as the treasured possession of the Covenant God. Because of this they received the sacrament of circumcision in the Old Testament as a sign and seal of this great privilege, and also because of this they receive the sacrament of holy baptism in the New Dispensation by which the same covenant benefits are confirmed.

(5) BAPTISM IN PLACE OF CIRCUMCISION

A fourth argument for Infant Baptism is contained in the scriptural fact that Baptism has taken the place of Circumcision. This is clearly told us in the New Testament revelation. The apostle Paul writes: "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead," Col. 2: 11, 12.

The apostle Paul clearly states that the Christian is circumcised with the circumcision not made with hands when he is baptized. Moffatt translates this part, "When you were buried with him in your baptism," and the translation of Goodspeed conveys the very same idea when it translates this part of the passage: "When in your baptism you were buried with Him."

Circumcision here does not merely refer to the cutting away of the external flesh. The true circumcision is always

spoken of in Scripture as being the circumcision of the heart which means sanctification. The apostle tells us here that this is exactly the meaning of baptism. It is spoken of as a burial with Christ, that is, the old man of sin is buried with Christ. This indicates a cleansing from sin or our sanctification. This same idea reoccurs in Gal. 3:27 and 29. The Bible clearly shows that instead of the two Old Testament sacraments, Circumcision and Passover, we have the two New Testament sacraments instituted by Christ; namely, Lord's Supper and Baptism.

In passing we must add that this text contains no proof whatsoever for immersion. It certainly cannot be pressed to prove this mode of baptism, since Christ was not buried in a grave dug into the ground as we are now accustomed to bury our dead. His sepulchre was hewn out of the side of a rock and a stone was placed at the entrance, we read.

As in the Old Dispensation the child was openly received in the Covenant by means of the initiatory rite of circumcision, so also the child is publicly introduced in the Covenant of Grace and the Christian Church by the sacrament of Baptism in the New Dispensation. That this is actually the case is very evident from the great Commission of Christ that is recorded in Mark 16 and Matthew 28. The apostles must make disciples of all nations and baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. By baptism they were publicly introduced into the Christian Church.

(6) NEW TESTAMENT DISPENSATION RICHER THAN THE OLD

From all that which we have written it has become more than evident that the children were always considered as members of the Covenant of Grace and of God's Church in the Old Testament. If we now say that they are deprived from these blessings in the New Dispensation it would mean that the New Testament blessings are inferior to those of the Old Testament. This is of course an entirely erroneous conception. Scripture everywhere teaches us that the New Testament dispensation is far richer and fuller than that of

the Old Testament. If this scriptural truth be granted then surely we must conclude that the children that were members of the church in the Old Testament and shared the covenant blessings, certainly must also be regarded in the same light in the New dispensation.

That the New dispensation is far superior to the Old is so self-evident throughout the whole of God's revelation that it need hardly be proven. In John's Gospel we read: "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," John 1:17. The author of the Hebrews draws a lengthy parallel between the Old dispensation and the New to prove to his readers the superlative excellency of the New dispensation to that of the Old. In the opening verses we read: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son," Heb. 1:1, 2. The children of the New dispensation certainly do not stand behind those of the Old dispensation in covenant blessings.

The Old Testament saints were taught to look forward to the blessed New Testament dispensation. To assume that the children of the New Testament church are deprived of the blessings enjoyed by the children in the former dispensation is most certainly incorrect in the light of both Old and New Testament scripture.

(7) COVENANT CHILDREN ARE CALLED HOLY

The letters of Paul to the church of Corinth are filled with practical exhortations and doctrinal expositions. Among the various subjects touched upon by Paul, he also mentions their children. In I Cor. 7:14 the children are designated as "HOLY" in contrast to the children of the unbelievers. This shows that there is a vast difference between the children of godly parents and those of the ungodly. By this the Apostle cannot mean an ethical holiness.

There is no ground for considering a pre-supposed regeneration as ground for baptism in this text.

By the Synod of Utrecht of 1905, and by our Synod of 1908 which took over this decision, it was declared:

> "That according to the Confession of our Church the seed of the Covenant by virtue of the promise of God is to be regarded as regenerated as sanctified in Christ, until the contrary is shown in their confession and conduct when they are reaching years of discretion; but that it is less correct to say that Baptism is administered to children of believers on the ground of supposed regeneration, since the ground for Baptism is the command and the promise of God."

If children are to be baptized on the ground of a presupposed regeneration then it is plain that the ground for Baptism is a presupposition. This is an unscriptural view and robs the sacrament of its objective value. The principal question in baptism is not, how does the minister or the church consider the child that is being baptized; but how does God look upon that child, and what does He mean by this sacrament. God commands the children of the Old dispensation to be circumcised and those of the New dispensation to be baptized not because of a supposition, but because they are covenant children. When Paul writes that the children of believers are "HOLY" he certainly does not mean that they are all regenerated. This is not an ethical holiness but a covenant holiness. From the whole context it appears that the Apostle regards the children as being in the Covenant of Grace in distinction from the children of the world. To them belong the promises of the Covenant of Grace which can all be summarized in that one phrase, "to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee," Gen. 17:7.

(8) PROMISE TO YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN

In Acts 2:39 Peter declares: "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Five facts are emphatically maintained in this beautiful passage:

1. The "PROMISE" is the technical term used throughout the whole Scripture for the distinct promise made to Abraham at the time the Covenant was formally established. Gal. 3:17, 29; Heb. 6:17. From these and many other Scrip-

ture passages it is evident that the "promise" can be no other than the covenant promise made to Abraham.

2. To whom do the promises belong? The answer is, "to you and to your CHILDREN." Therefore, the children are in the Covenant since the covenant promises belong to them as well as to the parents.

3. In verse 38 the apostle Peter makes this the ground for baptism. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." God therefore requires baptism "FOR THE PROMISE IS UNTO YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN"; in other words, because they and their children are members of the Covenant of Grace.

4. From the context we learn that the covenant promises here are the gift of the Holy Spirit and the forgiveness of sins.

5. This Covenant of Grace is also the ground for carrying on mission work. This is clear from that which follows. This promise is also "TO ALL THAT ARE AFAR OFF, EVEN AS MANY AS THE LORD OUR GOD SHALL CALL." Through the preaching of the Word effectually applied by God's HOLY SPIRIT that was poured out at Pentecost, God will call the elect together from every quarter of the universe and incorporate them into His divine Covenant. The Doctrine of Election and of the Covenant of Grace may never be looked upon as a barrier in our mission work but rather as a powerful incentive to bring the Gospel to the world with a greater zeal and earnestness. In the parable of the Good Shepherd, Jesus says: "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd," John 10:16. Jesus must bring these sheep into the sheepfold because they were given to Him by the Father from all eternity.

(9) CHILDREN OF BELIEVERS ARE MEMBERS OF CHRIST'S MYSTICAL BODY

The Bible everywhere recognizes the children as belonging to Christ in a special sense. Among the Scripture passages that have bearing upon this, the following deserve special attention:

1. Mark 9:36: "And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them: Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me." The phrase "to receive a child in the name of Christ" is explained by Jesus in the 41st verse of the context: "For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward." To receive such a child in the name of Christ is to receive Christ because the child belongs to Him. Children therefore of pious parents belong to Christ and must be received as such by His followers but they can be received as belonging to Christ in no other manner than through baptism.

2. Matthew 19:13-15. "Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence." Mark adds that He took them up in His arms and blessed them. Observe in this passage: First, that the parents who brought these children to Jesus were believers who wished from Him a blessing on their children. Secondly, they were small children. This is especially brought out by the evangelist Luke in chapter 18:15. The original Greek expresses this idea very clearly. Thirdly, the disciples rebuked the parents. Fourthly, Christ reproved His disciples and told them to suffer the infants to be brought to Him. Fifthly, Jesus declared that of such children the kingdom of heaven is composed. Sixthly, He took the children in His arms and blessed them. The kingdom of God here denotes either the present kingdom on earth or its final consummation at

the coming of Christ. Whether one or the other or both are here intended is of little importance just now. It is, however, highly probable that the present kingdom and the church on earth is here intended, because children in the present world constitute a part of His kingdom when they are members of the visible church. It is also plain that such children may not be forbidden nor excluded from the church. Jesus blessed them after He had made this declaration. The children whom Christ has blessed and whom He has told His ministers to permit to come to Him may certainly receive the sign and seal of God's divine covenant. (Cf. L. Dwight's Theol.)

In connection with this we also call your attention to what Paul writes to Timothy. "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus," II Tim. 3:15. This proves that Timothy was regarded by the apostle Paul as saved already when he was a child.

(10) CHRIST DIED FOR THE CHILDREN

Our Confession says "the Lord commanded in the Law that they (children) should be made partakers of the Lord's suffering and death, shortly after they were born, by offering for them a lamb, which was a sacrament of Jesus Christ." Our Church Confession here refers to the text found in Lev. 12:6. The sacrificial lamb was offered for the child in the Old Testament, and in cases of extreme poverty the turtle dove was substituted for the lamb. Think of Joseph and Mary bringing the sacrifice for Jesus. This sacrificial lamb was a type of Christ the true Lamb of God. "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us," I Cor. 5:7. God Himself provided the offering mentioned in Lev. 12. This proves that the atoning sacrifice of our Lord and Saviour was brought for the children as well as the adults. Because of this comforting fact they are entitled to the sacrament as a token of their share in the atonement (Cf. Beets Comp. Exp. p. 274).

(11) CHILDREN IN HEAVEN

Children of believing parents that die in infancy are saved. This scriptural truth affords great comfort to the parents that have been bereaved of their little ones. The psalmist David already understood this in the old dispensation when he spoke of his deceased child as not returning to him but that he (David) would go to the child, II Sam. 12:22, 23. The same truth is taught in the Book of Revelation. There the apostle John sees the dead both small and great praising God Rev. 19:5. In the next chapter the apostle "saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works," Rev. 20:12.

Our Confession teaches us that believing parents may not doubt the salvation of their children when they die before reaching the age of discretion. This scriptural assurance is grounded upon the Covenant of Grace of which such a child is a member. In this Covenant God promises to be the God of this child and receive him in His divine family. This promise belongs to the child. Before reaching the age of understanding and accountability the child cannot voluntarily reject this gracious divine assurance. To assume that such a child is lost would mean that we question this promise of God. Since God cannot break His pledge such an assumption becomes a sin. In the Canons of Dordt we read:

> "'Since we are to judge the will of God from His Word, which testifies that the children of believers are holy, not by nature, but in virtue of the Covenant of Grace, in which they, together with the parents, are comprehended, godly parents have no reason to doubt of the election and salvation of their children, whom it pleaseth God to call out of this life in their infancy, Gen. 17:7; Acts 2:29; I Cor. 7:14 (Canons of Dordt, 1, 17).'

"At that Synod of Dordt, on the basis of these and other texts, the Theological Professors of the Netherlands, who were members of the assembly, declared:

> 'From which places we conclude that the children of believers, dying in their infancy, must be considered as of the elect, since God has graciously taken them out of this life before they could have broken the conditions of the Covenant.'

"Thus the fathers of Dordt have expressed themselves concerning the salvation of such children, as also the texts cited show, exactly on the ground that the children of believers are included in the Covenant, really share in it; that, without conscious acceptance on their part, it has been established with them; and that therefore, since God is faithful and keeps His Covenant and they cannot have broken it, their salvation is assured. This implies that of children of the Covenant none are taken away by the Lord in their early youth but such as belong to the elect, and that before their death regeneration and justification are granted them" (Heyns Ref. Doct. p. 129).

(12) INFANT BAPTISM WAS NEVER FORBIDDEN

If the children of believing parents are no longer to be regarded as members of the Covenant of Grace and God's Church in the New Testament dispensation as they were unquestionably considered in the Old Testament, then surely we would expect an unequivocal plain statement in this regard from Jesus and the apostles. No such statement is found. We read quite the contrary in such passages as Matt. 19: 14; Acts 2: 39; I Cor. 7: 14.

"Christ's treatment of children whom He blessed and pronounced to be members of his Kingdom, and the analogy of Circumcision, which began with adult Abraham, and then extended to his children, naturally favored infant baptism as the initiatory rite of introduction into the Church and a signifying and sealing of the covenant promises. The blessing of the Covenant of olden days was to the seed as well as to the parent; the blessing of that same Covenant in the New Testament days could not be less comprehensive. This evidently is the main reason why no more specific command to baptize infants was given by our Lord. It was unnecessary. If the children of the New Testament Church had been deprived

of a suitable sacrament, the Master would have told us about it. Instead of this, his inspired apostle Paul in I Cor. 7: 14, in speaking of the fact that the children of believers were holy and not unclean, even though but one of the parents were a believer, plainly indicated that an organic relation exists between parents and children in our days as well as when faithful Abraham lived. Surely, we may conclude that the absence of a command forbidding the giving of a covenant token to the seed of the Church stamps the baptism of the little ones as pleasing to the great Bishop of our souls" (Beets, Comp. Exp. p. 275).

(13) INFANT BAPTISM ALWAYS PRACTICED IN THE CHURCH

Infant Baptism was uniformly practiced by the early Christians.

Justin Martyr, born near the close of the first century, observes, when speaking of those who were members of the Church, that "a part of these were sixty or seventy years old, who were made disciples to Christ from their Infancy." But there never was any other mode of making disciples, from Infancy, except Baptism.

Irenaeus, born about the year 97, a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of John, says, "Christ came to save all persons, who by him are born again unto God; Infants and little ones, and children, and youths, and elder persons." By being born again, Irenaeus means being baptized, as he himself clearly shows elsewhere.

Clemens Alexandrinus, born about the middle of the second century, says, "If any one be a Fisherman; let him think of an Apostle, and the children taken out of the water." This furnishes a decisive proof, that in Clement's view, the Apostles baptized Infants; and that this practice was, in his own time, the general practice of the Christian Church.

Tertullian, born about the same time with Irenaeus, says, "The delay of Baptism is more useful, according to every person's condition, and disposition, and even their age: but es-

pecially with regard to little children." The reason, which he urges for this delay, is, that their faith was not entire, or complete. As Tertullian is here directly opposing the common opinion; it is obvious, that little children were then commonly baptized. The reason why Tertullian proposed this delay, was, that he attributed to Baptism an importance, not given to it by the Scriptures.

Origen, born about the year 184, and a man of more information than any one of his time, says, "Infants are baptized for the remission of sins." And again; "The Church hath received the tradition from the Apostles, that Baptism ought to be administered to Infants."

Cyprian, who was contemporary with Origen, says, that "sixty-six Bishops, being convened in a Council at Carthage, having the question referred to them, 'Whether infants might be baptized before they were eight days old,' decided unanimously, that no Infant is to be prohibited from the benefit of Baptism, although but just born."

Gregory Nazianzen, born in the early part of the fourth century, exhorts parents to offer their children to God in Baptism.

Saint Augustin, born in the middle of the fourth century, says, "The whole Church practises Infant Baptism; it was not instituted by Councils, but was always in use." He also says, that he did not remember ever to have read of any person, whether Catholic or heretic, who maintained, that Baptism ought to be denied to Infants. "This," he says, "the Church has always maintained."

Pelagius, a contemporary with Augustin, declares, that "he had never heard even any impious Heretic, who asserted, that Infants are not to be baptized." Again he asks, "Who can be so impious, as to hinder the Baptism of Infants?" Pelagius is here a witness of high authority. He was born in Britain; and travelled through France, Italy, Africa Proper, and Egypt, to Jerusalem. Had such a practice existed in his time; it seems impossible, that he should not have heard of it. He was also an inquisitive and learned man; and must, therefore,

have been well informed concerning preceding periods. At the same time, the doctrine of Infant Baptism was objected against his own opinions by St. Augustin, in such a manner, that Pelagius knew not how to answer the objection. Still these are his own assertions.

A person who employed himself extensively in examining this subject, gives the following result of all his inquiries. "First; During the first four hundred years from the formation of the Christian Church, Tertullian only urged the delay of Baptism to infants, and that only in some cases; and Gregory only delayed it, perhaps, to his own children. But neither any society of men, nor any Individual, denied the lawfulness of baptizing Infants.

"Secondly; In the next seven hundred years, there was not a society, nor an Individual, who even pleaded for this delay; much less any, who denied the right, or the duty of Infant Baptism.

"Thirdly; In the year eleven hundred and twenty, one sect of the Waldenses declared against the Baptism of Infants; because they supposed them incapable of salvation. But the main body of that people rejected the opinion as heretical; and the sect, which held it, soon came to nothing.

"Fourthly; The next appearance of this opinion was in the year 1522."

Had the Baptism of Infants been ever discontinued by the Church; or had it been introduced in any age, subsequent to that of the Apostles; these things could not have been; nor could the history of them have been found (Cf. Dwight's Theol. p. 336).

THE DOCTRINE OF INFANT BAPTISM EXPLAINED

Here we shall deal with the subject of Baptism especially as it is brought out in our baptismal Form. If you will turn to the back of your Psalter to the Form for Baptism you will be able to follow our thought.

I. *The Doctrine of Holy Baptism*

"The principal parts of the doctrine of holy baptism are these three." The three great doctrines that are then referred to by our baptismal Form are:

1. The doctrine of total depravity. This is expressed in "That we with our children are conceived and born in sin," etc.

2. The doctrine of redemption from sin. "Holy baptism witnesseth and sealeth unto us the washing away of our sins through Jesus Christ," etc.

3. The doctrine of our gratitude which we owe to God for this redemption. "Whereas in all covenants, there are contained two parts: therefore are we by God through baptism, admonished of, and obliged unto new obedience," etc.

These three parts of our Christian Faith are most familiar to us. They are based especially upon Paul's letter to the Romans and also, as you know, comprehended in our Heidelberg Catechism.

(a) In the first place baptism teaches us our misery. The doctrine which underlies the whole form is that of total depravity. Salvation is not something that arises out of ourselves. It is a gift of the Holy Spirit. What do we mean by total depravity? Observe four things in connection with this. First, it does not mean that all men are as bad as they can be. There is still a difference between the devil and the ungodly. Secondly, it means that we are sinful in our whole being. The carnal mind, that is, our intellect, will and judgment, is enmity against God. Thirdly, it means that unless the grace of God restrains we will become as bad as we can be. Fourthly, and finally, it means that we are incapable of doing any spiritual good unless we are regenerated by the Spirit of God.

(b) The second doctrine mentioned by the Form is that of redemption. This is symbolized in baptism. The primary meaning of baptism is the washing away of our sins. As water cleanses the body so the Blood and Spirit of Christ purify our soul. This is our justification. The doctrine of regeneration is also symbolized in baptism. The Apostle says

that we are buried with Christ in baptism and raised to newness of life.

This is sealed to us by being baptized into the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Our Baptismal Form gives a beautiful explanation of this. It expresses the mystical union between Christ and the Church. This means that God promises to be our Father, Christ our Saviour and the Holy Spirit our Sanctifier.

(c) The third doctrine of holy baptism is that of our gratitude. We are obliged unto a new obedience. Baptism seals to us certain blessings which also carry with them responsibilities. Every blessing brings responsibility, but especially the blessings of the Covenant. Notice that our Form represents this as a duty not to which the baptized person binds himself but as something to which baptism binds him.

The duty is that we shall trust God and love Him. The first duty is that we shall trust God. This is the Christian Faith and is something which God has not left optional. Again and again we are commanded in Scripture to put our confidence in God and in God alone.

The second duty is that we shall love Him. This as you remember, is the sum of the Law of God. It shows itself in three ways.

1. That we forsake the world. Do we do it? Is there today a line of demarcation between the Christian and the worldling? Is it so in your life? The Church may be compared to a boat in the ocean. As long as the boat is in the water it is in its proper sphere, but when the water enters the boat it will surely sink. The Church is in the world but the world must not be in the Church. The Christian is set apart by God as a peculiar people.

2. We must crucify our old nature. In the Christian there is a perpetual struggle between the old nature and the new. The old man must be crucified. This expresses a painful and prolonged death.

3. We must live a new and holy life. We are a new creature and the old things are passed away. The Christian has

a new aim, namely, to glorify God. He has a new motive,—to love God. He has a new strength,—his strength is in God.

II. *What Baptism Signifies*

Our Form says that Baptism is a seal of the Covenant of Grace. What does that mean? What is a seal?

1. Baptism assures us of the validity of God's promises. After a thing is sealed that is proof that it is valid. When you receive a diploma from high school or college the seal makes it valid. It means that the school stands back of the diploma. The government seal upon the American dollar means the same thing,—the government stands back of it. God's seal upon the Covenant also has the same meaning. The Triune God declares that the promises of the Covenant are valid. In baptism God promises to be our Father, Christ our Savior and the Holy Spirit our Sanctifier. Upon these covenant promises God has placed the eternal seal of their validity by this sacrament.

2. Notice, however, that our Form goes farther than this. These blessings are not only promised, but they actually belong to us. They belong to everyone who is a child of the Covenant. This does not mean that all those who belong to the Covenant will actually become partakers of them. In other words, it does not mean that all covenant children are saved. Let me illustrate and I will draw my illustration right out of the Form itself. In the Form it is said that children are to be baptized as heirs of the kingdom of God and His Covenant. When a man is an heir, the goods which come to him by inheritance belong to him and he may claim them; but he does not necessarily become a partaker of them. He can reject his inheritance. You see there is a difference between ownership and possession. Let me illustrate again. Suppose a rich man makes his will. Suppose he names me as the sole heir and suppose he dies. Then all his goods belong to me. All those broad acres and fields—they are mine. I can go and claim them, but suppose I come and say "I don't want them," and refuse to accept the inheritance. Then I remain in poverty.

So also God's covenant children are heirs to God's covenant blessings. These blessings belong to them and are sealed by baptism, but it is necessary for us to claim them. We must lay hold of them through faith and it is only as we lay hold of them through faith that we actually participate in them.

Yet although we from our side may break the Covenant, God from His side will never break it. From God's side they have been given to us,—they belong to us. Now this truth gives us a twofold comfort.

(a) It comforts those who mourn the death of a covenant child. Believing parents may not mourn as those that have no hope because they have every assurance that their children are saved.

(b) A second comfort is mentioned in our Form. "If we sometimes through weakness fall into sin, we must not therefore despair of God's mercy." God does not change in His attitude of love toward us. When He gave us these blessings God found the reasons in Himself and not in us. He loved us when we were dead in trespasses and sins and made us heirs of Him even though we are unworthy. He will not disinherit us and as often as we return to Him with penitence and in faith He will receive us again in mercy.

3. In the third place a seal is a sign of ownership. When a man purchases something he often places his stamp upon it very much like a brand is used today. A seal sets a thing apart as belonging to a certain individual. So baptism as a seal sets God's covenant people apart. It separates them from the world. We are a peculiar people. Now this is expressed in the Form too. In the first prayer, you will find three things that are rather strange,—flood, Pharaoh, and buried with Christ in baptism. What does it mean? Immersion? I shall not say anything about the mode of baptism. According to Scripture, these three things mean separation from the world. Baptism therefore separates us from the world and consecrates us to Christ.

III. *The Requisites for Baptism*

Before baptism is administered to the child the parents are asked three questions. Two of these ask a confession and one requires a promise.

1. In the first place the parents are asked whether they believe that their children are born and conceived in sin, and sanctified in Christ. To be sanctified in Christ does not mean that the children are regenerated but rather that the covenant blessings belong to them.

2. In the second place they are asked whether they believe in the doctrines of the Old and New Testament that are incorporated in the twelve articles of faith. By requiring this confession our Form excludes adult members by baptism only, for presenting their children to receive this sacrament, since the confession is the same as that which is asked of them when they come to the Lord's table. This does not mean that the children have no right to be baptized, but the question is whether such parents have the right to lay claim to baptism for their children.

3. In the third place the parents are asked whether they promise to give these children a covenant training. Parents are duty bound to give their children a religious education. This too, is a matter which is taken altogether too lightly in our day. Let us be thankful that we have our Christian schools where our children may be educated according to the full requirements of the Covenant.

IV. *The Benefits of Baptism*

It is a great privilege for us to belong to the Covenant of Grace and to receive the Sacrament of Baptism.

1. The first benefit is this that baptism seals to us that we are heirs of the promises of God. All the Covenant blessings are ours, and they belong to every member of the Covenant—to our children too. As we have already said that does not mean that all those who are baptized will be saved. It may be that this is not the case. An inheritance may come to me and I may refuse to accept it. So also the blessing of the Covenant that God will be our God and that we shall be His

children, rightfully belongs to us and we may claim it through faith, but unless we accept God's promises through faith we cannot become partakers thereof. Yet it is a great privilege that these things are ours.

2. A second benefit is this that belonging to the Covenant of Grace we enjoy the Covenant ministrations. The Covenant is the sphere within which God usually operates with His saving grace and usually the line of election follows the line of the Covenant.

It is a great blessing to be reared in a Christian home, to be instructed by Christian parents in the doctrines of grace as they promise to do at baptism; to have the example of a godly father and a pious mother.

It is a great privilege to grow up in the Christian Church —to have a share in the administration of the Word as we have it in the house of worship—to share in the administration of the Word as we have it in the Catechism classes. It is a great privilege to have a share in the intercession and prayer of the church. It is a privilege for these children that the congregation prayed for them—not only prayed for them now but will continue to do so.

3. All these privileges bring with them responsibilities—and our responsibility is this that we through a personal faith shall accept for ourselves the blessings of salvation which God offers to us and that we live lives of obedience unto Him —as our Form puts it, that we forsake the world, crucify our old nature and live a new and holy life.

May God confirm His covenant blessings to us and may we serve Him as our Covenant God.

OBJECTIONS AGAINST INFANT BAPTISM ANSWERED

(1) *Faith Must Precede Baptism*

This is undoubtedly the main argument that is always advanced against infant baptism. We are told that Jesus mentions faith in Him as a positive requisite for baptism, Mk. 16. Peter likewise places repentance before baptism when he says, "Repent and be baptized." Now children cannot repent nor exercise such faith as Jesus meant,—hence they cannot be baptized.

Before answering this objection, it is necessary for us to know what kind of faith is meant by the objector. We distinguish between *active faith* and the *habitus or germ of faith.* This germ of faith for example was possessed by John the Baptist when we read that he was filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb. This germ of faith is received at the time of regeneration and can certainly be found with small children since the Bible gives us many examples of early regeneration. We are, however, explicitly told by the opponents of infant baptism that an *active* faith is necessary before this sacrament can be received.

In answer to this argument we first of all want to stress the fact that in Mk. 16: 16 we are dealing with the missionary command of Jesus. Here Jesus tells us how the Gentiles that are outside of the church, are to be received in the fold.

Faith is mentioned as a prerequisite for persons to be baptized,—but who were the subjects? In this commission Jesus commands the evangelization of the world. Before baptism the person must confess his faith in Christ,—*but this refers only to the baptism of the adult.* How do we know this? Because in this same connection Jesus mentions faith as a positive condition for salvation. Children do not exercise this active faith,—hence according to this reasoning, we must conclude that children cannot be saved. With this the premillennialist himself does not agree.

Our erring brethren say that this active faith must always

precede baptism,—but have they this certainty in regard to a grown-up that makes confession? They have not. No one can deny that many baptized adults show by their lives that they are not saved. The only ground our objectors have left for adult baptism is the assumption that such a person is a believer. According to this, baptism is based upon an *assumption!*

"It is best not to speak of faith at all as a ground on which baptism is administered, not even in the case of adults. Baptism is a sign and seal of the covenant of Grace, and the covenant relation is the only objective ground for baptism. This applies to the adult as well as to the children, but in the case of the adult we assume that they are in the covenant on the basis of their profession, and in the case of children we base our assumption on their birth from Christian parents,"—Berkhof.

(2) *No example of Infant Baptism in the Bible*

It is perfectly true that there is no example of this, but it is equally true that our opponents cannot point to one example of the baptism of an adult who was born and reared in a Christian home. But wherever we read of the baptism of a whole family it is self-evident that the baptism of the child is implied. So for example we read of the baptism of "Lydia and her house," of "the household of Stephanus," and others. An examination of scripture passages shows that "house" and "household" include little children. God says to Noah, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark," Gen. 7:1. We know that Noah's house consisted of his wife and children. "Let thy house be like the house of Phares," said the elders of Bethlehem to Boaz, Ruth 4:12. Here the meaning is precisely limited to children. From all this it is plain that also children must have been baptized by the Apostles in the New Testament time.

(3) *No Express Command in the Bible*

This is also true, but this proves nothing whatsoever. When the opposers object that infant baptism is never posi-

tively enjoined in the Bible, we might again turn the tables around by saying,—neither is there ever an express injunction or the slightest allusion to anything like a command to baptize adults that come from Christian homes. But the whole principle upon which this objection is based is erroneous. It amounts to this,—nothing is a duty unless it is positively commanded. It comes down to this,—women are under no obligation to celebrate the Lord's Supper, nor is any one obliged to keep the first day of the week as Sabbath, because neither of these is expressly enjoined in the Bible. The conclusion to which such a method of interpretation leads us, if it be consistently followed, would astonish even those by whom it is urged.

(4) *Children Do Not Partake of the Lord's Supper*

It is objected that those baptized in infancy are not regarded as members of the church since they are not admitted to the Lord's table, whereas in the Old Testament they did partake of the Passover. Our objectors, however, forget that there is a difference between the Lord's Supper and the Old Testament Passover even though they have essentially the same meaning. The Supper was instituted by our Lord to strengthen our faith, but since the small children are still unconscious of this living faith they cannot be benefited by this sacrament. On the other hand let us not forget that Passover also had a national significance, and since the children belonged to the common-wealth of Israel they also joined in its celebration. Besides this, Scripture teaches us that an earnest self-examination must precede the Lord's Supper. As long as a child does not understand the meaning of the Supper it is still incapable of such an examination, Cf. Div. Theol. P. 318.

(5) *Many Baptized Children Unsaved*

It is also urged against this doctrine that many children baptized in infancy show by their later life they do not belong to the fold of Christ. We reply, the same can be said of the baptism of the grown folks. Again this objection is

based upon a wrong conception. It comes down to this,—we may not baptize anyone unless we are certain of his salvation. But this rule is nowhere found in the Bible. The Apostles themselves did not always know who were the saved, for they baptized Hymenaeous, Philetus and others who turned away from the truth after their baptism. According to this they did wrong by doing so. This whole objection is obviously founded upon gross error.

(6) *Outward Ceremonies No Longer Exist*

It is sometimes argued against infant baptism that such a sacrament is an outward ceremony and entirely out of place in the highly spiritual dispensation of the New Testament. Infant baptism is a carnal ordinance, and must be regarded just as circumcision in the Old Testament. The folly of such reasoning is more than evident. Circumcision was a bloody sacrament and was abolished when Jesus died on the cross. After that there is no more shedding of blood for sin. It is not altogether true that circumcision was a carnal ordinance however. It was introduced at the time of Abraham when the religion was highly spiritual. Circumcision and the passover were signs and seals of the covenant of Grace in the Old Testament. "In so far as it was a type, it naturally ceased when the antitype came,"—Berkhof.

Chapter VII

UNBIBLICAL CONCEPTION OF THE KINGDOM

According to the Premillennialist the Messianic kingdom is still a matter for future realization. Christ is Head of His church but will not reign as King before He comes again. This kingdom will then be established in Palestine. Two facts are presupposed by the Premillennialist in regard to the Messianic kingdom. (1) This kingdom is not present but is something of future date beginning at Christ's second coming. (2) This kingdom is not spiritual but earthly. The Jews will be restored to their own land and their nationality shall be re-established.

THE KINGDOM IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

There was a time when God's Kingdom was realized in this world. This was in the Garden of Eden before the Fall of Man. There God was sovereign and supreme, and all His creatures spontaneously and obediently did His will. There was then no need for the prayer "Thy Kingdom come." God's Kingdom was there with all the blessings that flow from His dominion. Even though this Kingdom in paradise was glorious beyond description, yet the highest ideal had not been attained. Eternal life was still suspended upon the condition of perfect obedience on the part of man. Had Adam been obedient the everlasting kingdom would have been present in all of its perfection and glory.

Then sin came into the world and everything was changed. You will remember that the first sin consisted essentially in this, that man cast off the Kingship of God. By transgressing the commandment man deliberately and willfully trampled

on the sovereignty of God. Man rejected God's kingship and destroyed the image in which he was made. And so there came into this world another kingdom, the Kingdom of Satan.

Since the Fall there are two great empires that influence the earth. The one is spoken of in the Scripture as the "world," and the other is called the "Kingdom of God." Each empire has its own institutions. The world has its active agencies that are constantly endeavoring to rob God of His glory. The great institution of the kingdom of God is the Christian Church. The perpetual effort of the world is to bring the kingdom of God in conformity with the institutions of the world. It seeks to abolish all distinctions between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. It is imperative therefore, for the Christian Church to have a thorough understanding of the kingdom of God and its relationship to the Church. We need to emphasize with renewed clearness the present complications that come to us because of our relationship to Christ. The Christian's citizenship is in heaven. He is a member of another kingdom and subject to a different King than the world.

After the entrance of sin, the gracious God again places Himself on the side of man. He is willing to re-establish a covenant relationship with His rebellious creatures. The ultimate triumph of His Church over the forces of darkness is assured. The seed of the woman shall be distinguished from the brood of the serpent. This marks the initial commencement of the kingdom of God. His Divine kingdom is coexistent with the Covenant of Grace.

As God's revelation to man in the covenant was of a progressive kind; so also we can trace the gradual establishment of this divine kingdom. The Old Testament theocracy was especially the domain of God's absolute authority. God was the sovereign King of Israel. To Samuel He said: "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not be king over them."

The principal idea of the theocracy was, however, not lost after the time of the judges. God remained King of Israel. Saul, David, and all the other kings ruled as the

representatives of God, and Israel was still the sphere of Divine authority. As King, He served as Israel's Law-giver and Protector. By direct revelation He gave both civil and moral laws.

The Divine kingdom, however, did not come to its final consummation in the Old Testament. God, through His prophets, predicted a more glorious display of His power than had been witnessed by the fathers of old. His kingdom would assume a more spiritual form in the future. The laws would be written in the hearts of the subjects. The Messianic kingdom that was to be ushered in by the promised Messiah is the great subject of Old Testament prophecy. Daniel, in his vision, sees the rise of the four great world empires, only to be completely overshadowed by the eternal kingdom of the Son of Man. "And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed," Dan. 7: 14. In this Messianic kingdom, Christ would rule by divine authority and finally triumph over the powers of the world. "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel," (Ps. 2: 6-9).

This future Messianic kingdom was to be of a spiritual nature. Isaiah predicts that the Messiah shall be anointed as king. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn," (Isa. 61: 1, 2). Jesus quotes this passage during His ministry to authenticate His divine mission to establish the kingdom. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because

he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord," (Luke 4:18, 19).

Old Testament Peculiarity

Before leaving the doctrine of the kingdom as it is revealed in the Old Testament, it is essential for our purpose to point out an Old Testament peculiarity in its conception of the Messianic kingdom. We have already said that the revelation of God is of a progressive character. The New Testament revelation advanced beyond the Old Testament. The Messianic kingdom that was predicted by the prophets is partially realized in the New Testament dispensation. Because the realization is partial, it is spoken of as something present and something future in the New Testament. The initial stages of the Messianic kingdom are already realized during Christ's earthly ministry. Jesus says to the Pharisees, "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you," (Matt. 12:28). Here the kingdom is spoken of as something present. He also speaks of the same Messianic kingdom in the future sense when He says, "And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven," (Matt. 8:11). Jesus, therefore, spoke of this kingdom as present and future.

This double aspect of the kingdom is painted on one canvas in the Old Testament. The Old Testament prophecies do not make a clear distinction between the present and future stages of the Messianic kingdom. For example, Isaiah's prediction of the Messianic kingdom does not differentiate clearly between the two. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God;

to comfort all that mourn," (Isa. 61:1, 2). This part is quoted by Jesus in Luke 4 to show that the predicted kingdom has been realized with His coming. Jesus, however, omits "and the day of vengeance of our God." Why does the Savior omit this? The answer is clear. This part of Isaiah's prophecy refers to the future aspect of the Messianic kingdom which shall be realized at Christ's second coming. The present and future Messianic kingdom are thus painted on one picture in the Old Testament prophecies. The distinction between the two is not clear cut.

The same fact is evident from the prophecies of Joel that are quoted by Peter in the Book of Acts. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: and I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come," (Acts 2:17-20). This prophecy predicts the Messianic kingdom in its two-fold sense. In the first part we have a prediction of the Messianic kingdom that was realized at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the second part speaks of the future Messianic kingdom as it shall appear at Christ's second coming. Then the sun shall be darkened and the elements of nature shall be changed.

Also, John the Baptist still had the Old Testament conception of this Messianic kingdom. The burden of the Baptist's message was: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight," (Matt. 3:2, 3). Here he speaks of the Messianic kingdom as at hand. This is the present Messianic kingdom. In verse ten of the same chapter, he prophesied the future kingdom as it would appear at Christ's return, when he says: "And

now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire," Matt. 3:10. This is the picture of the judgment seat.

When John is in prison and hears of the works of mercy that were done by Jesus, he sent two of his disciples to inquire, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" After the disciples had seen the miracles they carried back the Savior's message to John, "Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me," Matt. 11:4, 5, 6. These are convincing signs of the present reality of the Messianic kingdom. Jesus says, if we may put it in our own words, "John, it is true that I shall come with the ax in the hand to cut down the barren branches, and it is also true that I shall appear with the fan to purge the threshing floor, but this part of my Messianic work still lies in the future. When I come again to establish the eschatological Kingdom these events shall all be accomplished, but my present work as Messiah is to inaugurate the kingdom of which you spoke at the Jordan, and the present miracles of which you have heard and which your disciples have seen, are evidences to the fact that this present kingdom is now realized." John the Baptist's Old Testament conception of the kingdom can be attributed to the fact that he still belonged to the Old Testament Dispensation. It is true that he stands at the border, but still he is not yet a recipient of the New Testament kingdom blessings.

From all this it is plain that the double aspect of the kingdom; namely, as something present and future, is not clearly distinguished in the prophecies of the Old Testament.

These diagrams will help to make it plain.

Kgd. of God in O.T.	Present Kgd.—(Nation of Israel—the Theocracy)
	Future Kgd.—(First and second coming of Christ)

Kgd. of God in N.T.	Present Messianic Kgd.—(with Christ's first coming)
	Final Kgd.—(Christ's second coming)

Importance of the Kingdom Doctrine

In the books of the New Testament, the doctrine of the kingdom of God receives a very prominent place. The synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) comprehended the whole ministry of Jesus in the term "Kingdom of God." Jesus began His ministry by preaching the gospel of the kingdom and saying, "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe the gospel." In Luke we read that He was sent to preach the gospel of the kingdom. In the beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount, the kingdom occupies a very important place. Jesus says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." etc. And, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." The many kingdom parables that were uttered by Jesus also reveals the importance of the kingdom idea. The Messianic work of Jesus is to bring about, establish and consummate the kingdom of God. Paul sums up the whole mediatorial work of Jesus in I Corinthians 15 when he says that He will give the kingdom back to the Father that God may be all in all.

When Jesus and John the Baptist speak of the kingdom as being at hand they mean that the promised Messianic kingdom is now about to be established. The ministry and work of Jesus stands in direct connection with the prophecies of the Old Testament. Jesus is conscious of the fact that He stands on Scriptural basis and that He is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy which centered around the future Messianic kingdom. The Jews in Christ's day were too carnal minded to recognize Jesus as their King. The kingdom of which Christ spoke in his parables and preaching was altogether too God-centered for them to understand. Their own leaders were also looking for the dawn of a new day with the coming of the Messiah. Instead of designating this as the kingdom of God, they usually referred to it as "the coming age." They spoke of it as a national kingdom that would bring external glory to Israel. When Jesus calls it the kingdom of God, He places the emphasis where it belongs; namely, on God. In this He rebuked the Jews and corrected their gross misconception. It remains a sad fact that the Jews were spiritually unqualified to comprehend the significance of their own prophets and consequently failed to see in Christ their promised King. It is, however, more than a pity that this Jewish kingdom conception should again revive and even flourish in the Christian Church of the twentieth century.

Phrases "Kingdom of Christ," "Kingdom of God," and "Kingdom of Heaven" used Interchangeably

It must be observed that in the Bible "the kingdom," "the kingdom of God," "the kingdom of heaven," and "the kingdom of Christ" are often identified. The contention of the Chiliast that the "kingdom of Christ" is employed only to designate the future kingdom and is sharply distinguished from the "kingdom of God" is without Scriptural support. The fact is that Christ's kingdom is often identified with the kingdom of God. In His explanation of the parable of the tares, Jesus distinctly speaks of His kingdom as being identical with the kingdom of God. "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his king-

dom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity. . . . Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father," (Matt. 13: 41-43). Paul writes to the Ephesians that evil men have "no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God," (Eph. 5: 5). Here the kingdom of Christ is the same as the kingdom of God. To the Colossians Paul writes that the believers are "translated into the kingdom of the Son of his love," (Col. 1: 13). Here the kingdom of Christ is spoken of as already existing at that time. It cannot be said that the apostles make uniform distinction between the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of God as the Chiliasts maintain. Paul sometimes speaks of the kingdom of God as future, (cf. I Cor. 6: 9; 15: 50; Gal. 5: 21; Eph. 5: 5; II Thess. 1: 5, 7). The kingdom of God also appears as being present, (cf. Rom. 14: 17; I Cor. 4: 20). So also Christ's kingdom is spoken of as both present and future. In Ephesians 5: 5, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Christ are identified.

SPIRITUAL NATURE OF THE KINGDOM

In Matthew's gospel, this kingdom is generally called the kingdom of heaven. Matthew uses this phrase more than thirty times, whereas "kingdom of God" is only employed a few times. Why should Matthew prefer to speak of this as the "kingdom of heaven" instead of the "kingdom of God"? It is not certain what may be the reason for the substitution. Dr. Vos offers a plausible explanation. He sees one reason for Matthew's peculiar terminology in the fact that Matthew wrote his gospel for Jewish readers, whereas Mark and Luke wrote for Gentiles. The Jews had a sacred regard for the name "God" and readily understood the term the "kingdom of heaven." The Gentiles would understand "kingdom of God" better than "kingdom of heaven."

The simplest explanation is that "heaven" is the name for God. This is seen in the parable of the prodigal son, when we read "I have sinned against heaven." The Jews especially emphasized God's exalted nature above the world. This is, we believe, the significance of this term. This kingdom is an

exalted glorious realm which is far higher than the world.

The true meaning of the term may also be learned from the Lord's Prayer: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Heaven is the region where God's will is done in a perfect way. Heaven is the glorious pattern for God's kingdom on earth. This spiritual domain is therefore called "kingdom of heaven" because it is modelled after heaven and is of absolute perfection.

"Kingdom of heaven" also designates the eternal value of this realm. So, for example, we are urged to lay up treasures in heaven. The eternal value of these heavenly treasures is contrasted with the transient earthly possessions.

Another meaning of this term can be deduced from the prophecies of Daniel when he speaks of this kingdom being set up by "the God of heaven." In contrast with the kingdoms of the world this kingdom is of heavenly and divine origin.

The deep spiritual nature of this realm is also expressed by the other term "kingdom of God." The glory of God is the ultimate end of all things. This is also true of the kingdom. The supreme purpose of Christ's coming was not realized in the kingdom of God as such, but must be sought in the great design back of the kingdom; namely, God's glory. Paul comprehends the whole purpose of the Messianic mission in the phrase "that God may be all in all." For that end Christ was born and to attain that purpose He must "put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (I Cor. 15:24-26). Christ also sums up the sublime purpose of His whole work when He says: "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4).

Jesus very seldom speaks of this spiritual rule only as "the kingdom," but generally designates it as "the kingdom of God" or "the kingdom of heaven." It is the domain in which God rules supremely and in which all the divine perfections are most gloriously revealed. The doctrine of the kingdom has no meaning apart from God. (Cf. Vos—Kgd.)

The Premillennialist becomes guilty of a serious error

when he speaks of Israel's external glory as the main purpose of this kingdom. The emphasis is shifted from God's glory to Israel's glory. This is a sad mistake and in direct conflict with the whole Scripture. In this we see the revival of the Jewish hope which was so prominent at the time of the apostles. The disciples also looked for the greatness of Israel instead of looking higher to God. Because of this they often failed to understand Christ's mission. The spiritual nature of God's kingdom is always placed upon the foreground, but the Jews in Christ's day and the Chiliasts of the present time fail to apprehend it.

When the Pharisees demanded of Jesus to tell them the time of the coming of the kingdom He answered: "Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you," (Luke 17:21). The inauguration would not be associated with any display of earthly power or glory. Practically all of the kingdom parables emphasize this spiritual nature. Jesus even says that the purpose of His parabolic teaching is that the disciples might understand "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." These mysteries were hid from the world. He spake in parables concerning the kingdom that the enemies might see but not understand. Had he immediately proclaimed His kingship they would have put Him to death at once. His claim as king aroused the hatred of the Jews at the end of His life. They desired Pilate to alter the superscription above the cross: "Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews," (John 19:21). His Messianic claim as king was one of the reasons given for His crucifixion.

The spiritual nature of the kingdom is also emphasized in John's gospel. The unregenerate eye cannot perceive the kingdom. Jesus says, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" and, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," (John 3). In John's gospel the sphere of life is substituted for kingdom. Regeneration means the implanting of a new life and by this act one is brought within the king-

dom. "Eternal life" and "kingdom" are also used interchangeably in Mark 10. After the question of the rich ruler "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" is answered, Jesus adds "How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!" Here "eternal life" and "kingdom of God" are equivalent terms. Life expresses the communion between God and the soul. This blessed relationship is restored in the kingdom. This is the greatest blessing of the kingdom.

In Matthew 18:3 we read: "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." This passage plainly teaches that in order to be saved one must "be converted," that is to say, he must become a new creature in Christ Jesus. The parallel expression "enter into life" shows that to enter into the kingdom and to enter into life are the same thing. No one can become one of the kingdom except he is saved. This also brings out the spiritual nature.

Intimately related to the realm of life is that of truth. Jesus speaks of the kingdom as the domain of truth. "Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice," (John 18:37). Truth is the opposite of a lie. A lie is a false presentation of the reality. Jesus calls Himself the truth because He is the perfect and true revelation of God. He is the effulgence of God's glory and the express image of His substance. He is the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us. The kingdom is identified with truth as it is the realm in which God is revealed as He is in all of His peerless attributes. In this rule the subjects know their King, Whom to know is life eternal.

The kingdom of God is therefore designated as the realm of life and the realm of truth to emphasize its spiritual nature. The failure to comprehend this is almost inconceivable.

To all this must be added that Jesus positively says to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world" etc. The Chiliasts

also realize the strength of this statement. In order to evade the difficulty they have emphasized the idea of origin in the Greek preposition "of" (ek). Even though we should grant that Jesus means by "not of this world"—not of worldly origin, it still leaves the statement unaltered as to its spiritual meaning. If His kingdom is not from this world it must be from the other world—not earthly but heavenly; not the material but the spiritual. But the whole context brings out the spiritual character of the kingdom for Christ adds: "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence," (John 18:36). Because it is not of the world it will not be propagated by worldly means. "So that to assert, that Christ means that His kingdom was not to arise out of this world but to come down from heaven, is not at all to deny, but rather, indeed, to declare its essential spirituality, its other worldliness, its unworldliness."

We might almost go on indefinitely to prove the unreasonableness of the supposition that the kingdom is external and material. Paul says: "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," (Rom. 14:17). These plain scriptural truths must be subverted to a strange exposition by Chiliastic ingenuity to evade the self-evident conclusion that Christ's kingdom is of a spiritual nature.

Spiritual Blessings of Kingdom

The spirituality of the kingdom is also evident from the spiritual blessings which the recipients enjoy. The glory of God is the great design for its establishment. This, however, does not exclude the blessedness for man. These two are often closely united in God's Word. The greatest conceivable blessing for man is salvation; and it is through man's salvation that God is glorified. The supreme reign of God within the hearts of men is the normal state of affairs. The re-establishment of this is a very important part of man's salvation. This existed before the fall in Paradise, and it shall be so again in heaven. Such a glorious ideal is partially attained in

this life. The Christian already here rejoices with a joy unspeakable and full of glory. With God's servant he can say, "Mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts." All other things, both temporal and spiritual come to him with the divine kingship. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" says Paul, and Jesus bids us to "seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).

In connection with this we must name another blessing connected with the kingdom; namely, the *Divine Fatherhood.* Jesus often places this upon the foreground. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," (Luke 12:32). In this kingdom God is not only our protector as King, but also our spiritual benefactor as Father. Jesus' conception of "Fatherhood" is much too high to make it universal. The believers and the believers only, are God's children. As God's children they reflect the image of the Father. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). The world must recognize our sonship when it sees our works. As the natural child reflects the nature of the parent, so must we also show forth the image of God so that the world may ask, "Who is the Father of those children?" The great privilege of sonship is expressed in Luke 20:36: "Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection."

The *superlative value* of this kingdom is also revealed in the parables of the Pearl of Great Price and the Treasure in the Field. Both parables emphasize the idea of value. In both cases everything is set aside and renounced in order to become possessors of the transcendent good. The great worth of the kingdom is also seen in the fact that God prepared it for His own before the foundation of the world. Jesus says that the believers inherit the kingdom which God prepared before the world was created.

Compare this magnificent kingdom conception and the great blessings that are associated with it, to the crude mate-

rialistic conception of the Premillennialist. What a vast difference between the two! How can the Chiliasts reconcile their Jewish doctrine with this spiritual presentation?

The *earthly rulership* was always far removed from the Savior's mind. Jesus was never interested in the national kingdom of Israel. He makes a sharp distinction between—"Give unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's"—and, "My kingdom is not of this world." These two are too far apart to be reconciled. We fail to notice any special display of patriotism for the Jewish nationality in all of His teachings. When He speaks of the future Messianic kingdom which shall be established at His second coming He adds the pathetic prophecy: "The children of the kingdom shall be cast out." Many shall come from east and west and from north and south but the original heirs shall have no part in it. In the great commission "Go ye into the world"—He did not single out the Israelite. At another time He plainly says that the kingdom shall be taken away from them and given to the Gentiles who shall bring forth the fruit.

The spiritual character of this future Messianic kingdom is also contained in *Jesus' answer to the Sadducees* in regard to the resurrection. In the final kingdom they "neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven," (Mark 12:25). The family relationship shall cease. This harmonizes with the description found in the Apocalypse where we read that they shall neither hunger nor thirst. In this future kingdom the righteous shall shine as the sun, the prophets shall be seen, the pure in heart shall see God, and those that hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be fed.

The crude earthly conception of a transient Jewish empire in which Jesus rules as a temporal king is entirely foreign to the whole trend of Scripture teaching on this subject. The proof is positive and conclusive that the kingdom of God is the inheritance of those who are saved by the gospel, and second, that the kingdom of God is not the restoration of the Jewish nationality and kingdom.

CHRIST'S KINGDOM A PRESENT REALITY

According to the Chiliastic view the kingdom of Christ is not only to be external and material but is something entirely of a future date. Jesus will inaugurate His future millennial kingdom at the time of His second coming. After the thousand years are finished, He will give the kingdom back to the Father. The kingdom of God in Paul's teaching, we are told, refers to that coming reign of God after the thousand years have come to an end.

The present aspect of the kingdom is just as plainly represented as its spirituality. Scripture everywhere teaches that the kingdom of Christ is now in action. The prophet Zechariah exclaims, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." The Evangelist describes the fulfillment of this prophecy by saying, "The whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice, saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord."

The Synoptics tell us that Jesus when He entered the public ministry immediately began to preach, "This is the acceptable year of Jehovah," (Lk. 4: 18-21). That the kingdom of God was present is also evident from Matt. 12: 28 and Lk. 11: 19, "If I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then the kingdom of God is upon you." Whether we translate this "within you" or "in your midst" as some prefer, is of little importance for our present purpose. Either case brings out the thought clearly that the kingdom of God was present at that time. The translation "within you" would designate the kingdom not only as present but also as spiritual in its nature.

In Luke 7: 28 and Matt. 11: 11 the word concerning John the Baptist places him outside the kingdom, because he belonged to the Old Testament dispensation. The present existence of Christ's kingdom can also be proved by the most overwhelming evidence in the record of John the Baptist as it is found in Matt. 11. The context shows that John the

Baptist sent two of his disciples to Jesus to ask him whether he was the Messiah. Jesus here speaks of John the Baptist in the most complimentary terms. He is called the greatest of the old Testament prophets—because the law and the prophets prophesied until John. He was the prophet whose coming had been foretold by Isaiah as the voice crying in the wilderness, and by Malachi as the Elijah who was to come. He stands out as the greatest of the prophets. Yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John. Jesus here compares the New Testament dispensation with the Old. The New Testament is so far superior to the Old Testament that he who is the greatest (John the Baptist) in the Old Testament dispensation, is less than the least in the New Testament dispensation, in which the kingdom of heaven was inaugurated. This, of course, does not imply that John has no part in the future kingdom of Christ. With the "kingdom of heaven" Jesus here designates the present Messianic kingdom which He came to establish. All this proves that the Messianic kingdom of Christ was then present, (cf. Vos, The Kingdom of God).

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus declares "Seek ye first the kingdom of God," which implies that the kingdom is there. Dr. Warfield calls this text the grand summary of the whole Sermon on the Mount. Here the kingdom is spoken of as something that can be obtained in this life. From the context we learn that the Christian need not ask what he shall eat or what he shall drink, for after all these things the Gentiles seek. The kingdom is something that must be sought for by him and then all these things pertaining to this life shall be added unto him. This shows that it is here designated as something present.

In the parable of the Wheat and the Tares, we read of the two growing up together until the time of the harvest. The kingdom contains the tares as well as the wheat. This can only be said of the present Messianic kingdom.

At the trial before Pilate, Jesus answers the question, "Art thou a king then," by "Thou sayest that I am a king."

Peter declares of Jesus that He now sits on the throne

of David. "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the Patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Here the resurrection of Christ is connected with His sitting on the throne. It is evident that this is fatal to the Millennium theory that our Lord will not occupy the throne of David until He returns and establishes a literal throne in Jerusalem. In the Apocalypse John hears the voice saying, "I have the keys of David," which also is not future, but present.

In connection with these passages we would also observe that in Paul's teaching the kingdom of God is not exclusively future. In Rom. 14:17 the kingdom of God appears to be a present reality, and in I Cor. 4:20 the kingdom of God and the present reign of Christ are identified. In other places the future kingdom is also spoken of as the kingdom of Christ, (Eph. 5:5 and II Tim. 4:1). This indicates that no hard and fast distinction between the Kingdom of Christ and the Kingdom of God can be found in Paul.

The Future Kingdom in the New Testament

The present and the eschatological kingdom are both represented in the teaching of Jesus. We cannot get rid of either one without critical elimination or violent exegesis. With reference to the eschatological side it is almost super-

fluous to establish this as it is generally accepted. Our Lord repeatedly speaks of His kingdom as a supernatural state which must be realized in the future. It is a state in which many shall come from east and west, (Matt. 8:11), and in it the righteous shall shine as the sun, (Matt. 13:43). This cannot mean merely a figurative representation of new joy, (Luke 13:28), because in this kingdom the typical things are fulfilled, (Luke 22:16). The meek shall inherit the earth, (Matt. 5:5), and the pure in heart enjoy the vision of God, (Matt. 5:8). This kingdom is spoken of as having been prepared before the foundation of the world, (Matt. 25:34). The future joy for the disciples is described as existing in eating and drinking with Christ in the kingdom, (Luke 22:29, 30). In the answer of Jesus to the mother of the sons of Zebedee, it is clearly evident that there is such a thing as sitting at His right hand, (Matt. 20:21).

KINGDOM OF POWER, KINGDOM OF GRACE AND KINGDOM OF GLORY

A few distinctions must be made in regard to this Kingdom. We must first of all remember that Christ is king in a twofold sense. As the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, Christ together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, is king over the whole creation. This may be called His natural kingship and it extends from eternity to eternity.

Alongside with this natural kingship, Christ also has His Messianic kingship. This kingship belongs to Christ as the Messiah. In this Messianic kingship we must again distinguish between the "Kingdom of Power" and the "Kingdom of Grace." The Kingdom of Power is Christ's Messianic kingdom which he exercises over the whole creation as Messiah. That he has such a kingdom can be seen from Matt. 28, "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth." This kingdom is universal and by it Christ exercises complete rule both in heaven and on earth. Yet this kingdom is not the same as the natural kingdom which belongs to Him by virtue of His godhead, but it belongs to Christ as Messiah. That this is so can be seen from the fact that it was given

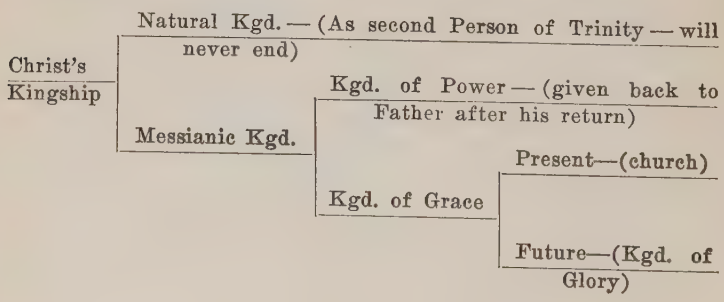
Him. "All power is GIVEN unto me." Christ's kingship as the second person of the Trinity was not given to Him, but belongs to Him by nature. Christ's kingdom of power, therefore, belongs to Him as Messiah, and extends over all things, in heaven and on earth.

Alongside of this stands Christ's Kingdom of Grace, or His kingship over the church. "Yet have I set MY KING upon my holy hill of Zion," Ps. 2:6. This also belongs to Christ as Messiah.

In Christ's Messianic kingship, therefore, we must distinguish between His Kingdom of Power and His Kingdom of Grace. The Kingdom of Power extends over the whole creation and the Kingdom of Grace extends over His church.

The Kingdom of Power exercised by Jesus as Christ, will one day come to an end, "Then cometh the end when he shall deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all His enemies under His feet," I Cor. 15:24, 25. As second person of the Trinity, Christ will always reign over all that is. It is His Messianic Kingdom of power, or the authority over the whole of creation as Christ, that He will give back to the Father.

The Kingdom of Grace, on the other hand is an eternal Kingdom and will never end. "And of His Kingdom there will be no end," Lk. 1:33. Christ's kingship over His church is everlasting which will issue into the Kingdom of Glory in Heaven.



Chapter VIII

UNDENOMINATIONALISM AND THE UNDERVALUATION OF THE CHURCH

The views of the premillennialist in regard to this matter are expressed in the Scofield Bible, as follows: "In approaching the study of the Gospels the mind should be freed, so far as possible from mere theological concepts and presuppositions. Especially is it necessary to exclude the notion—a legacy in Protestant thought from post-Apostolic and Roman Catholic theology—that the church is the true Israel, and that the Old Testament foreview of the kingdom is fulfilled in the church." This radical denunciation of our Reformed conception of the church will be passed by unchallenged for the present time.

First of all it is essential for us to know exactly upon what ground our erring brethren base their contention. The Chiliast can, of course, not deny that in the New Testament Christ's Kingdom is spoken of as being present or "at hand." It must be remembered that all of these plain Scripture passages which speak of the Kingdom as a present reality are approached by them with a preconceived notion. These passages do not mean what they say. The Chiliast first postulates the supposition that Christ's Kingdom is exclusively future and earthly in its character. He must therefore harmonize his preconceived idea of a future material Kingdom with the many Scripture passages that speak of the Kingdom as something present. This he does by the "Postponement" or "Abeyance" theory.

THE ABEYANCE THEORY

These passages, to begin with, says the Chiliast, mean something entirely different than the plain meaning they

convey. When Jesus came into the world about nineteen hundred years ago the Jews could have immediately become possessors of this earthly kingdom. The kingdom was then actually at hand, and offered to the Jews upon the condition of faith and repentance. They spurned the offer by refusing to accept Jesus as their King. As a result of this, Jesus postponed the establishment of His Kingdom. During the interval of this postponement, an entirely different organization is set up, namely, that of His Church. The New Testament church, instead of being the realization of Old Testament prophecy, is considered a detour in God's dealings with men. The Old Testament prophecies have not reached their fulfillment in the New Testament dispensation, but will be completely realized during the Millennial reign.

When John the Baptist proclaimed that "The Kingdom is at hand," and when Jesus began to preach "The Gospel of the Kingdom," he meant that the Kingdom was now ready to be established. With this the Premillennialist does not agree. He says, "When Christ appeared to the Jewish people the next thing in the order of revelation as it then stood should have been the setting up of the Davidic Kingdom" (Scofield Bible). When the Jews failed to repent and refused Christ as their earthly King, the postponement of this Kingdom to the future was made necessary. In other words, Jesus would have set up his kingdom among them immediately, but instead of hailing Him as their promised King, they nailed Him to the cross.

In the notes of the Scofield Bible, the alleged rejection of the Kingdom is supposed to have taken place during Jesus' Galilean ministry as we find it recorded in Matthew 11. The Kingdom which was announced to be at hand by both John the Baptist and Jesus Himself, and later by the twelve apostles, and attested by miraculous works, has now been morally rejected. This was the great turning point in the ministry of Jesus. The Chiliast claims that Jesus speaks of the Kingdom as something future after this event.

Criticism of Abeyance Theory

In this whole scheme, the Church occupies a very subordinate position. It exists only for the purpose of filling the unfortunate gap of time that was occasioned by the Jewish refusal of Christ's temporal Kingdom. The church is spoken of by them as the kingdom of mystery existing between the time of the final rejection of the kingdom by the Jews, and Christ's second coming when this earthly millennial kingdom will be fully realized. The establishment of the Kingdom was postponed from the first to the second advent. During this intervening period the church is set up. We wish to submit to your consideration several serious objections against this whole scheme. Some of the errors are so glaring that they hardly need to be pointed out.

(1) *Establishment of Messianic Kingdom Not Dependent Upon the Jews*

Neither John the Baptist nor Jesus teach that the inauguration of Christ's Kingdom was in any way dependent upon the Jews. When the Jews refused Jesus as the Messiah, He did not say that the founding of the Kingdom would be postponed until His second coming, but He did say that the Kingdom would be taken away from them and given to the Gentiles. The vineyard is given to other husbandmen who shall bring the fruit in due season. When the Jews rejected Jesus he said to them, "Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner; this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof," Matt. 21:42, 43.

(2) *Apparent Denial of Glorious Design of Christ's Coming*

In the second place, the Scripture never says that Jesus came for the purpose of setting up an earthly kingdom. It is declared repeatedly that he came to seek and to save the lost. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life as a ransom for many. The faithful saying is

that Jesus came into the world to save sinners. With all this the premillenarian contention that Jesus came to set up an earthly kingdom is directly at variance.

(3) *Kingdom Realized Through Suffering*

From the first to the last it is evident from the Gospel teachings that Jesus' Kingdom can be set up only through His suffering. Says Philip Mauro, "For whatever the 'throne' which was promised to Him, whether heavenly or earthly, the only pathway to it lay through the predicted sufferings and death that awaited Him. The concurrent testimony of all the Scriptures is that the prophecies concerning David's promised Son were to be fulfilled only in resurrection, (See for example Acts 2:29-32, and 13:22-24 and 32-34). His 'Father's business' upon which He had come was not at all in connection with the earthly expectations of Israel, but was for the Redemption of the whole world, and the introduction of a spiritual Kingdom composed of redeemed sinners out of every nation under heaven."—(The Gospel of the Kingdom, p. 68.)

(4) *The Cross Uncertain*

What would have become of the cross of Christ and his resurrection from the dead if the Jews should have accepted the supposed Kingdom offer? This question is left unanswered by the Chiliast. The whole vicarious atonement of Christ is made to depend upon the fortunate refusal of the Jews to accept the Kingdom. This places the major part of the Old Testament promises concerning Jesus' suffering and death as well as the New Testament accomplishment in a very dubious light.

(5) *The Infallibility of Jesus*

Another matter which baffles even the ingenuity of the Chiliast concerns the many statements of Jesus about his present Kingdom.The question is, was Jesus correct when he said that the kingdom was then present—or was he mistaken. Scripture tells us that Jesus spoke of this Kingdom at the

very outset of His Messianic ministry. Both John the Baptist and Jesus teach repeatedly that "the Kingdom is at hand." The only intelligent meaning of the phrase "at hand" or "is nigh" is that the promised Kingdom is now ready to be realized. Otherwise we are forced to admit that there is an essential change in the objective teaching as well as the subjective consciousness of Jesus concerning this vital truth. This would imply a mistaken conception on the part of our Lord,—a denial of His infallibility. We know that the Chiliast refuses to assume this fearful conclusion. Still it is logical. He must concede that the whole matter of the postponement of the Kingdom brings about a strange paradox in the Lord's teachings.

In the preceding chapter it was clearly demonstrated that this Messianic reign of Christ is not only spoken of as being at hand, but actually established. The Lord teaches, "If I by the spirit cast out devils, the Kingdom of God is within you." To Pilate he says, "Thou sayest that I am a King." Even the Jews acknowledged this. They said to Pilate, "Write not 'The King of the Jews,' but that he said 'I am the King of the Jews.'" Jesus speaks of His Kingdom as being in action. All this is contradicted by the novel "Postponement Theory," to which the Chiliast resorts to help him out of the dilemma.

(6) *Denial of the Unity of the Church*

This new theory denounces the Biblical doctrine that the Gentile church is the true Israel of God, as an innovation of the Catholic church. Let us see whether this is so. Is it right to label the Christian doctrine that the present church is the true Israel as a "Mere Theological Concept and presupposition" and as "a legacy in Protestant thought from Post Apostolic and Roman Catholic Theology"? Against this sweeping statement we wish to register our serious objection. We believe, and are convinced, that the New Testament church is the true Israel. It is the continuation of the church of the Old Testament. The names which designate the church in both the Old and New Testaments show plainly that the

church of God is the same in both dispensations. It is made up of the people of the Lord called out of the world. This is the very essence of the church, according to the Scripture. The name church is applied to Israel in both the Old and New Testament, (Lev. 4:13, 15; Heb. 2:12; Acts 7:38). The Spiritual unity existing between Old Testament Israel and the New Testament church is clearly expressed (Eph. 2:11-22; 3:4-6). Christ is the tie that binds the Old Testament Israel and the New Testament church together, (Rom. 4:9-25; Gal. 3:16).

Organic Unity of God's Revelation Denied

The absolute separation between Israel and the New Testament church breaks the organic unity of God's revelation. There is a direct connection between the work of redemption and God's special revelation. The redemptive work of God is an organic and gradual process. With every new development in the work of redemption, we find a corresponding new element in the revelation. The Old and New Testament are related as prophecy and fulfillment, shadow and reality, type and anti-type. The Scripture cannot be broken. All this is denied by the Postponement Theory.

(7) *Teaches Two Ways of Salvation*

The denial of the spiritual unity of the church is serious indeed. The Bible teaches that the middle wall of partition is broken down. Jews and Gentiles are one in Christ. By repudiating this precious doctrine, the Chiliast teaches two ways of salvation—one for the Jew and one for the Gentile. The Jew after the flesh is saved in a different way than the New Testament believer. A display of God's wrath in the millennial Kingdom is substituted for the plain preaching of the Gospel. "Exception must be taken to the assumption that the Kingdom of God will not in any way be established by the quiet internal invisible operation of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the Gospel; but only by great judgments at the end of the present age. In the original Kingdom

of God in paradise God ruled by His Spirit in the heart of man, and man, in turn, ruled by an inherent spiritual power over the lower creation and made it subservient to the glory of God. The entrance of sin into the world disrupted this Kingdom and robbed man of his spiritual power. The kingdoms of the world that were then established, were based on violence. If the original Kingdom of God is to be re-established the spiritual power of man must be restored, so that he may once more be clothed with true royalty, the royalty of the spirit. This cannot be accomplished by violence, but only by the power of the Spirit of God. Hence the means that are now employed are perfectly adapted to the end in view," (Berkhof Class notes on Kingdom). This breaks the organic unity of the whole work of salvation and must inevitably lead to many serious results. The Gospel is spoken of as the power of God unto salvation for both Jew and Gentile.

(8) *Disregards Historical Testimony*

The Christian church has always accepted the Scriptural truth that the New Testament church is the true Israel. There was never any doubt that the church of Christ is the true Israel of God. This was adhered to by the witnesses to the truth during the Apostolic times as well as in the middle ages. Justinus, the martyr, who is generally considered by the Chiliast as being one of the first Pre-Millennialists, writes, "We who have been brought to God through the crucified Christ, are the true spiritual Israel, and the seed of Judah, and of Jacob, and of Isaac, and of Abraham." Other quotations from the church fathers such as Augustun, Calvin, and the later reformers, could be multiplied to substantiate this fact. According to the pre-millennialist the church has always erred in this matter. We believe that the great truths of the Bible are manifested to the church by God's Spirit, and cannot understand how she could have continually erred in such an important matter as this.

PLACE OF CHURCH IN GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

Upon the question, "What believest thou concerning the Holy Catholic church of Christ?" our Heidelberg catechism answers, "That the Son of God from the beginning to the end of the world gathers, defends, and preserves to himself by his Spirit and word, out of the whole human race, a church chosen to everlasting life, agreeing in true faith; and that I am and for ever shall remain, a living member thereof." From this answer it appears that the catechism assigns a very important place to Christ's church in the great scheme of salvation. It is now assumed that our church fathers were mistaken. A new light has dawned in regard to her true position. The doctrine that the New Testament church is the true Israel is labeled "a legacy in Protestant thought from Post-Apostolic and Roman Catholic Theology." This statement is so radical and the truths involved are of such superlative importance, that we shall now thoroughly examine it in the light of God's Word. What did Jesus say of the church and what place did he assign to her in God's redemptive plan?

There are only two direct references to the church in the teachings of Jesus. They are found in Matt. 16:18 and in Matt. 18:17. The first passage is especially important for our present consideration. Here Jesus says in reply to Peter's confession, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Matt. 16:18 and 19. This scene at Caesarea Philippi marks the great turning point in our Lord's ministry. Before this time he spoke of the Kingdom of God. After this time he especially emphasizes his own Messiahship. The teaching of the church is placed between the teachings concerning the Kingdom and the teachings concerning Himself as the Messiah. From this it is evident that the church is vitally related to both. What is the relationship of the church to the king-

dom of God and what is her relationship to Christ's Messianic work? These questions will now be considered. Our answer will also teach us the true position of the church in God's plan of salvation.

THE CHURCH AND THE MESSIAHSHIP

(1) First, therefore, what is the relation between the church and the Messiahship? Notice that Jesus does not define the term "church." Neither is it defined by any of the Evangelists. This was not necessary because the disciples already knew it. The New Testament church is not a new institution. It already existed in the old dispensation, and consequently need not be defined by Jesus. In the Book of Acts Stephen designates God's people of the Old Testament as the "church in the wilderness." The Greek word for church is Ekklesia, which comes from EK-KALEO,—meaning "the called out." This idea was already on the foreground in the Old Testament. The saints were separated from and called out of the world. The term "my church" is not used to contrast the Old Testament church with the New Testament church, because the Old Testament church also belonged to Christ. The contrast is rather with that corrupted institution over which the Pharisees claimed leadership. The church of Israel had degenerated. This is evident from the whole context. They failed to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah of God. One said he was John the Baptist; another Elijah; another Jeremiah, and still others thought he was one of the prophets. The disciples are the representatives of the true church. This becomes evident from their confession which was made by the mouth of Peter in regard to Jesus' Messiahship. Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church," to bring out the contrast between the true church and the degenerated institution that then existed. The contrast is not at all with the Old Testament church. This is significant as it shows that the Old Testament church is perpetuated in the New Testament dispensation. Exactly what one would expect. How different from the teachings of the new Postponement Theory. According to

this, the church is a new institution, entirely separated from the Old Testament.

(2) Observe in the second place that Jesus says, "I will build my church." The church is therefore a building. This is also brought out by Paul,—"That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." I Tim. 3:15. Jesus builds this church by His death and resurrection. This is evident from that which follows. We read, "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day," Matt. 16:21. It is incorrect to say with the Millennialist that the church did not exist before the time of Christ's death and resurrection. Jesus already died in principle when he assumed His Messianic work in the covenant of redemption. This dates back from eternity. We read of the Lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world. The work which He had undertaken in the counsel of peace is now about to be accomplished. This spiritual building is based upon the solid foundation of Christ's atoning death and triumphant resurrection.

(3) By the expression "upon this Rock I will build my church," Jesus does not teach that the church is built upon the subjective confession of Peter. "Our Lord says emphatically, 'I will build,' and thereby appropriates for Himself the objective task of calling this church into existence by His Messianic act," from Vos-Kingdom, p. 144. Jesus refers especially to the contents of Peter's confession, namely, that HE is the Christ. As Christ he must die and be raised again, and that is the solid foundation upon which the church rests. Peter did not fully comprehend his own confession. This is plain from that which follows. When Jesus informs his disciples that in order to build that church He must suffer and die and be raised again, Peter rebukes Him. Jesus answers, "Get thee behind me Satan; thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men," Matt. 16:23. This was a temptation for Jesus.

(4) Notice also that Jesus speaks of the triumphant future of the church when he says, "And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The reasons why the gates of hell will not prevail are three-fold:

(a) The church is built upon a solid foundation. It is nothing less than Christ's atoning sacrifice. To prevail against the church would be to overthrow His Messianic atonement. This is impossible.

(b) The church is built by Christ Himself. In principle, the forces of hell are conquered by Christ already. The government is upon His shoulders, and He has the keys of death and hell. His Messianic Kingdom shall be set up by the proclamation of the Gospel because to Him as Messiah is given all the power in heaven and on earth, (Matt. 28:19-20). "And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven," Luke 10: 18, 19, 20.

(c) Even now the conquering power which insures victory belongs to the church. Already during His ministry Jesus cast out the devils through the Holy Spirit. This proves that Satan is no match to war against the Holy Spirit. When the power of the Spirit is manifested Satan's power is broken down. After the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the Christian Church has nothing to fear from the garrison of Satan. The conquering power; namely, the Holy Spirit, continually abides in her midst.

CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM

The Church is not only vitally related to the Messianic work of Christ but is also directly connected with the Kingdom of Heaven. This is also brought out clearly in the subse-

quent context. Jesus says to Peter, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matt. 16: 19.) We must now determine the exact relationship existing between the Church and the Kingdom of God.

Erroneous Views

The Roman Catholic Church believes that the Kingdom and the Church are identical. Membership in the Church of Rome entitles one to membership in the final triumphant kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is an impossible exegesis because when the keys of the Kingdom are given to the Church it does not mean that the Church has power to save. The binding and loosing does not refer to heaven itself. Dr. Vos correctly says that the keys here are not the keys of a gatekeeper, but rather of the janitor of the building to whom the affairs of the whole building are entrusted. The phrases "to bind" or "to loose" are variously understood. Generally it is interpreted to mean "to forbid" and "to allow." This is the way it was used among the Jews.

The Premillennialists go to the opposite extreme. They claim that the Kingdom of Heaven is something entirely different from the Church. The Church and Kingdom are two separate domains standing apart from one another. Christ is not king of the Church, but His kingdom shall be established at the end. It can be readily seen that according to this interpretation the Church occupies a very inferior place. We also believe that this interpretation lacks all scriptural grounds.

On the one hand there is certainly a difference between the present Church and the future eschatological Kingdom. Every member of the Christian Church will not be saved. On the other hand it is also evident from this and other parts of Scripture that there is an intimate connection between the Church and the Kingdom. Jesus entrusted the keys of the Kingdom to the Church.

Membership of the Invisible Church and Kingdom Identical

"So far as extent of membership is concerned Jesus plainly teaches us to identify the invisible Church and the Kingdom. It is impossible to be in the one without being in the other. We have our Lord's explicit declaration in John 3:3 and 5 to the effect that nothing less than the new birth can enable man to see the kingdom or enter into it. The Kingdom, therefore, as truly as the invisible Church is constituted by the regenerate; the regenerate alone experience in themselves its power, cultivate its righteousness, enjoy its blessing. . . . . It may be said that the Kingdom designates believers in their relation to God as ruler, the church, believes in their separateness from the world and their organic union with one another. Or, that the Church designates believers in their attitude of worship toward God, the Kingdom, believers in their ethical activities toward one another. Or again, that the Church designates the people of God from the point of view of their calling to be God's instrument in preparing the way for and introducing the ideal order of things, the Kingdom, the same people of God so far as they possess the ideal order in principle realized among themselves. These and similar distinctions have their doctrinal usefulness and are unobjectionable, so long as they do not obscure the fact that the Kingdom, as well as the Church, is circumscribed by the line of regeneration, and that the invisible Church itself is not that which determines its inner essence, its relation to God and Christ, a true kingdom, since it consists of those over whom the Messiah rules as the representative of God," (Vos, Kingdom of God and the Church, page 159).

The Visible Church and the Present Kingdom

There is also a close similarity between the visible Church and the present Kingdom. In a certain sense these two are identical. In Matthew 16:18 and 19, the names church and kingdom are used interchangeably. The close relationship existing between them is also expressed by the term "building" which is applied to both. In Acts 15:13 to 17, the same idea is expressed. "After this I will return, and will build again

the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up," (Acts 15:16). The tabernacle of David is an expression which designates the theocracy in the Old Testament. James informs us here that the gathering of the Gentiles is the reestablishment of this Old Testament kingdom. Observe also that both Church and present Kingdom still contain an undesirable element. Every member in the Church is not saved. This is evident from the fact that unto the Church is entrusted the matter of discipline expressed by the phrase, "I will give unto you the keys of the kingdom of heaven," etc. The Church and the present Kingdom are therefore alike in that both are described as buildings and both are still in the state of imperfection.

This does not mean that the Kingdom can be identified with the Church under all circumstances. The term Kingdom has a wider application than the Church. It has already been said that the Kingdom of God designates the absolute supremacy of God in the human heart. This means that every subject of the kingdom seeks God first in every sphere of life, such as in art, culture, education, etc. All this must be included under the term Kingdom but not under Church. Even in respect to this these two cannot entirely be separated. "While it is proper to separate between the visible church and such things as the Christian state, Christian art, Christian science, etc., these things, if they truly belong to the Kingdom of God, grow up out of the regenerated life of the invisible Church," (Vos—Kingdom of God, page 165). We may say that the visible Church gives the outward expression to the invisible Kingdom.

Stewardship of the Kingdom Entrusted to the Church

When Jesus says to Peter, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven," He entrusts the affairs of the kingdom to the Church. The apostles here are the representatives of the Church. "The keys spoken of are in all probability not the keys of the outer door, but the keys pertaining to the entire house, the keys not of the gatekeeper, but of the

house-steward, and therefore symbolize the administration of the affairs of the house in general. (Cf. Is. 22:22; Rev. 3:7). . . . . Peter receives the keys of the kingdom to bind or loose on earth. What he does in the administration of the kingdom here below will be recognized in heaven," (Vos, Kingdom of God, page 149).

To the Church are entrusted the affairs of the present kingdom and she becomes a means for its realization in the hearts of men.

Church Government Based Upon Christ's Kingship

With the keys of the kingdom she exercises this power through the proclamation of the Word and Christian discipline. This power is based directly upon Christ's authority as King. To deny Christ as King is to deny all ecclesiastical authority. Christ as King received all the power in heaven and on earth and it is to this King that all the members of the Church owe absolute allegiance.

Connection Between the Postponement Heresy and Undenominationalism

The relationship between the two can be easily accounted for. The postponement theory maintains that the Church originated because of the Jewish refusal to accept the kingdom when it was offered. The Church, therefore, is not the true Israel but an abnormal institution to fill the gap of time between the first and second coming of Christ. At the second coming the millennial reign will commence and the Jews restored to the normal position. The Gentile Christians will then occupy a subordinate position to the Jews. The national Israel will again have the pre-eminence.

According to this view the Church loses her place of importance. She is not the true Israel of God. It is easy to understand why the extreme Premillennialists under-value her position in God's redemptive plan.

SOME REASONS FOR THE GROWTH OF UNDENOMINATIONALISM

That this movement of Undenominationalism recently re-

ceived a new impetus in and around Grand Rapids, cannot be denied. How can we account for the sudden growth of this strange plant in such apparently unproductive soil? One of the causes must be ascribed to the sad lack of true Bible knowledge. The practical lesson for us to apply to ourselves is this: let us with renewed determination and prayerful earnest effort preach and teach the great doctrines of Calvinism which we believe to be contained in God's infallible Revelation, in such a way that our church members may not only know where the church stands but may also know why the church stands where it stands. With the rise of this present undenominationalism we begin to see the first sheaves of an undesirable harvest, resulting from a failure to thoroughly understand the fundamental doctrines of Scripture.

Another reason for the defection of many of our members both in the Reformed and Christian Reformed churches, must perhaps be traced to cold dogmatism in the pulpit. We feel convinced that many have left our church circles and turned to undenominationalism because of a defect in the preaching of the gospel. The great doctrines of salvation are altogether too often expounded in a cold abstract way, as something entirely apart from our Christian life. This, we believe, is a serious failure in our present day preaching. Spurgeon says correctly, "My brethren, this is a lesson for us; let us never reckon that we have learned a doctrine until we have seen its bearing upon our lives. Whatever we discover in God's Word, let us pray the Holy Spirit to make us feel the sanctifying influence of it. You know not a man because you recognize his features, you must also know his spirit; and so the mere acquaintance with the letter of truth is of small account—you must feel its influence and know its tendency. There are some brethren who are so enamored of doctrine that no preacher will content them unless he gives them over and over again clear statements of certain favorite truths; but the moment you come to speak of practice, they fight shy of it at once, and either denounce the preacher as being legal, or they grow weary of that which they dare not contradict. Let it never be so with us. Let us follow up the truth to its practical

"therefore." Let us love the practice of holiness as much as the belief of truth; and, though we desire to know, let us take care when we know that we act according to the knowledge, for if we do not our knowledge itself will become mischievous to us, will involve us in responsibilities, which will bring to us no effectual blessing. Let everyone here who knoweth aught, now pray God to teach him what He would have him to do, as the consequence of that knowledge. (Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Vol. 1873, p. 265).

Chapter IX

OPPOSITION TO THE CHURCH CREED

The undervaluation of the Church Creed among our Premillenarian brethren is a subject upon which we need not elaborate. It is a recognized fact that the extreme Chiliast either totally disregards the doctrinal standards of the Church or places them in an entirely inferior position. The simple gospel as it is contained in God's Word is sufficient for any church, is their favorite slogan. Why emphasize doctrine at all? There is undoubtedly a strong tendency among them to undervalue the importance of Biblical doctrine. This, we believe, is an entirely unscriptural position.

> "For creed and truth let zealous bigots fight
> He can't be wrong whose life is in the right,"

is not the slogan of the Christian. This is the position of modern theology. They would separate that which is vitally connected; namely, ethics and doctrine. We are fully aware of the fact that our premillenarian brethren reject the church doctrine for a different reason. Yet it cannot be denied that they are standing on dangerous ground when they reject that which is also repudiated by the higher criticism of to-day.

Doctrine Alone Not Sufficient

It cannot be gainsaid that our whole life is influenced by that which we believe. The Bible everywhere brings the glorious truths of God in connection with our life. There are two strong tendencies to-day that are perhaps equally dangerous: the one is to emphasize Christian living irrespective of one's faith; the other is to stress doctrine and neglect duty.

There is a tendency in this age to throw doctrinal truths

in the shade. Too many preachers are offended with the stern truths of the Reformation to which our forefathers bore witness in the midst of a licentious age. We are told that the times have changed: that we are to modify these old (so-called) Calvinistic doctrines to bring them down to the tone of this present time, but let us also remember that a man might preach all the doctrines to the full and yet fail to proclaim the full counsel of God. It is not sufficient to stress doctrine alone, we must also preach duty; we must faithfully and firmly insist upon practice. So long as one preaches nothing but bare doctrine there is a class of men with perverted intellect who will admire the preacher. But when he says outright "without holiness it is impossible to please God," immediately the cry of inconsistency is heard.

Doctrine and Life Are Placed Together in God's Word

The letter to the Romans certainly ranks foremost among Paul's doctrinal epistles. After the Apostle deals with the glorious facts of salvation as they are contained in the doctrines of predestination, calling, justification and glorification, he comes to the practical "therefore" in chapter 12. Thus should the practical always flow from the doctrinal, like wine from the cluster of the grape. The Puritans were wont to call the end of the sermon, in which they enforced the practical lessons, the "improvement" of the subject, and truly, the Apostle Paul was a master in the way of "improvement." In the eighth chapter he speaks of predestination; but instead of discussing it abstractly and apart from the Christian life he tells us its glorious design; namely, that we should be conformed to the image of Christ. The doctrine of immortality and the resurrection of the body is enforced with the practical "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord," (I Cor. 15:58). The doctrine of the judgment to come stimulates the Apostle to a greater earnestness; because "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" and because he knows the "terrors of the Lord" he persuades men. From all this it

is evident that doctrine and life are vitally connected in God's Word.

The intimate unity between doctrine and life, ethics and belief, is constantly emphasized in our Church Standards. Our Heidelberg Catechism begins with the personal question, "What is thy only comfort in life and death?"

Doctrine and creed are, therefore, essential for our Christian life. Experience verifies that which is also abundantly confirmed by history that in the same proportion the great truths of the Bible are known in a church or community, in the same measure the spiritual and moral life flourishes. Ignorance of God's Word brings an inevitable decline of spiritual life whereas a right understanding of truth invariably produces sanctification.

Cannot the Bible be Our Creed?

The charge of inconsistency is often laid against the doctrinal church. "Is not the Bible alone sufficient?" we are asked. "Why must we have a fallible man-made creed next to the Bible? Your church places the catechism above the Bible." Such remarks and insinuations are in constant circulation. Against these and similar charges we must protest.

To say that a Christian Church that emphasizes the creed is neglecting the Word of God is entirely beside the mark. Moreover, it is not true that we place the catechism above or even on the level with Scripture. "The catechism contains in systematized form important truths that lie scattered throughout the Bible," (Rev. Van Baalen's Banner article). There is not the slightest conflict between the catechism and the Bible.

The Bible contains God's progressive revelation of the great plan of salvation not first of all in a systematic way; but rather as it was progressively revealed to the saints of old. The Scriptural Canon that begins with the Book of Genesis closes with the Apocalypse of John. It is the calling of the church to study this Scripture diligently and prayerfully and to arrange these great Biblical doctrines in a systematic way. This is done in order that they might be the more easily com-

prehended. This is exactly the purpose of our catechism. The precious gems of God's Word are skillfully and systematically placed together in the glittering diadem of our Confession. Instead of undervaluing Scripture, our catechism places the Biblical truths in their proper and logical place, in that it shows how each truth is related to our Christian life.

It is noteworthy to observe that much of this talk against our church standards originates exactly with those that prove to be in disagreement with their contents. Under the pretense of being an ardent lover of God and His Word, many direct their sarcastic arrows against the doctrinal standards of the Christian Church, alleging that the church places their Confession above the inspired Volume; while in reality they scorn the catechism because of their absolute disagreement with its contents. "By far the bulk of the criticism against catechism preaching comes from people who have gotten out of line with the Reformed doctrine. They do not agree with our teaching concerning the Sacraments, especially of Baptism; they have become enamored by some strange eschatology. Their particular brand of doctrine is not in the catechism. Hence, they object to the catechism," (Van Baalen's Banner Article).

The Church must have the Creed because to the Church are entrusted "the oracles of God." She must not only see to it that these sacred oracles are proclaimed through the world, but must also zealously guard them against the enemies. Seventh Day Adventism, Russellism and Roman Catholicism and a host of others continually appeal to Scripture in order to substantiate their distorted views. The Church must have a safe criterion by which these can be tested. This criterion is providentially provided for her in the Heidelberg Catechism.

OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE CREED CONSIDERED

It cannot be unknown to most of you that many objections have been strenuously urged against the Church Creed by the Premillenarian brethren. It is proper for our justification to show that these objections are unfounded.

1. The first is *"THE HUMAN MIND OUGHT NOT*

TO BE PRE-OCCUPIED AND BIASED BY BEING TAUGHT THE PRINCIPLES OF ANY RELIGIOUS CREED OR SYSTEM WHATSOEVER. The mind must be left perfectly free and unprejudiced so that it can impartially judge and adopt for itself those religious tenets which appear to be most rational and free from error." This objection may seem very logical and reasonable, but upon a closer examination it is entirely untenable. Nothing is more conclusively indicated than that children are greatly influenced by their parents and family surroundings. The teacher and parents do much to form the mind of the child. Under God's providence the parents are often directly instrumental in determining whether the child grows up cultured or uncultured, educated or ignorant. If this is true in regard to the natural life of the child, how much more is it true concerning his spiritual life. The youth is not left to himself in acquiring knowledge in the natural realm. How preposterous is it to contend that his religious education must be left entirely to himself.

The objection also fails to understand the melancholy truth that children come into this world totally depraved. Sin has so darkened their understanding that they cannot grow up unprejudiced, but will soon show a very decidedly partial opposition against true religion.

The objection is also diametrically in conflict with the plain Scriptural injunctions,—"Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it," and Paul writes to Timothy with decisive approbation that from a child he had known the Holy Scriptures, "Which," he adds, "are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

No Christian parent can be ignorant of these Scriptural warnings. The thought cannot be tolerated that Christians should fail to use the very best methods at their disposal to instruct the youth systematically and thoroughly in the fundamental doctrines of God's Word. The Catechism was originally intended to answer this problem and has served the Christian Church for the past three and one half centuries in this regard. The Church has always had its standards of

faith. The Twelve Articles of our Apostolic Faith were accepted by the Church almost sixteen hundred years ago. The Christians of the past were loyal to the Scriptural injunction but the present day Chiliastic movement which totally breaks away from the old church standards, has, as far as we can judge, forsaken the landmarks of the fathers. The Church must not only maintain but also decisively re-emphasize the doctrinal truths of its standards because of the high and awful responsibility with which she is entrusted.

2. The second objection which we propose to answer is that in teaching and preaching the Catechism *WE SUBSTITUTE A HUMAN COMPOSITION FOR THE INFALLIBLE WORD, NAY,—THAT WE EVEN PLACE MAN'S WORD ABOVE THE WORD OF GOD.* This objection also rests upon a false assumption. If those who urge this objection do not know that their assumption is false, they must be charged with an inexcusable ignorance. Any fair-minded student of the catechism knows that our standard is not placed alongside with the Bible, and far less above the Bible, but is firmly built upon it. Scripture is everywhere acknowledged as the only Standard of faith and practice. No men ever lived that were more ardent lovers of God's Word and more strenuous advocates for their religious sentiments than the composers of our church standards. Hence, the Catechism as well as the other church standards constantly base their doctrines upon Scripture. Scriptural proofs have been added point by point to every clause of our Confession.

3. The Third objection states that *NO CREED OR CATECHISM OUGHT TO BE FORMED OR TAUGHT UNLESS IT USES THE EXACT WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.* This is supposed to be a very strong ground for opposition. We think otherwise and are ready to give our reasons. Every sect that bears a Christian name appeals to Scripture in order to support its religious tenets. The Roman Catholics, for example, insist that Scripture supports their view of purgatory. The Russellites appeal to Scripture for their denial of hell punishment, and the Christian Scientists

even go to it to deny sin. Our catechism and church standards are intended to declare to others the way in which we understand God's Word. Those who agree with us in our interpretation and understanding of the Bible, we cordially welcome to our Christian fellowship, and those who do not agree, we leave and separate ourselves from them without denying them the privilege of forming a communion by themselves with others with whom they are in agreement. Is this narrow minded? Is this an unreasonable position? We believe not.

4. The fourth objection urged against our catechism is that *IT IS SO DRY AND OUT OF DATE*. Now this objection is true or it is not true. If it is true then the fault certainly does not lie with the catechism but either with the minister that expounds it or with the member in the pew. Our Heidelberg Catechism stands as a tested tree in the forest that has successfully weathered the storms of the past. Or it may be compared to a house firmly established upon the rocks unaffected by the trials of the past.

It maintains its place as a mighty bulwark of the Church against which the waves of infidelity and unbelief are dashed with ceaseless fury. It is as much a source of comfort for thousands of Christians to-day as it was in the past. The doctrines of the catechism are the doctrines of the Bible brought together in a small compass so that they might be seen at one view. These great truths are never out of date since God's Word will forever abide.

In all seriousness we would ask the question, *"Why discard this precious heritage of the past?"* The world of unbelief opposes the Christian creed because it knows too well that a large measure of the strength of the church can be found in her doctrinal standards. For the Chiliast to disregard the church standards is, to put it mildly, assuming a very precarious position. It is always fraught with great danger to see one lined up on the side of unbelief even though the stand may be taken with a different purpose. The slogan "The Bible is our only creed" has become effective to conceal many unscriptural sentiments. The Reformed and Christian Reformed Church wants the world to know how we understand

God's Word. We therefore formulate our standards as carefully as possible and give the passage of Scripture along with our creed for the very purpose to show that it is solidly based upon the Gibraltar foundation of God's infallible Word.

"But," answers the Premillennialist, "have not great discoveries and advancements been made in regard to the doctrines contained in the Bible?" That prophecy may be better comprehended, that some passages are made more clear by learned Biblical criticism, by historical investigations and by geological researches and geographical discoveries, no one denies. But the contention that an entirely new system of theological thought has now come to light is, we believe, to the highest degree improbable. The pretension of this new and important discovery is proven to be the more false by its very claim of NEW and IMPORTANT. God in His providence reveals the important doctrines of salvation to His Church. The Biblical doctrines that are important to-day were just as important in the past; and we do not believe that the whole church has been deprived of truths important for her edification for nearly two thousand years. Our church standards profess to specify only the leading truths and doctrines of God's revelation. They do not extend to the unimportant circumstances and unessential particulars. They have incorporated only that which we believe to be unchangeable. Our catechism restricts the human mind no more than it is restricted by Divine authority. "Will anyone contend that it is either unlawful or unprofitable to select from the different parts of the Sacred Volume the chief principles and doctrines of Divine revelation to digest them into system and thus to present them in a connected view? What is a sermon—or at least what ought it to be—but the statement, illustration and enforcement of some revealed truth? And why may not this as lawfully be done in a catechism, or a confession of faith, as in a sermon, or indeed in any form of discourse or communication? 'To the law and to the testimony'—is not that the practice for which I here plead—that of making summaries of religious truth—countenanced by what we find in the Bible itself? What is the Decalogue, or Moral Law, but

a summary of religious truth and duty? What is the Lord's Prayer, but a summary of devotion? What did the apostle Paul mean when he expressly commanded Timothy—'Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me' and when it is considered how short a time the Apostle remained in some of the places in which he established churches, we can, I apprehend, scarcely conceive that, at first, he had time to do more than to give his converts, as missionaries now do, a summary of Christian truth and doctrine. . . . . This practice, then, appears, I think, to be warranted by apostolic example and Divine authority," (Lectures on the Shorter Catechism. Green, p. 27). Exactly this kind of instruction is sorely needed in the Christian Church so that the members may know "the first principles of the oracles of God." Especially our youth must be established in the great doctrines of the Bible in order that they may not be "carried away with every wind of doctrine." A thorough understanding of our Church Creed will serve as a means to qualify us to live to the honor and glory of our Covenant God. Creeds may be abused but this is no reason why they must be rejected. The Bible is also abused, but no lover of God would think of rejecting it on that account. Such an argument would destroy everything that is beneficial.

Chapter X

CONFUSION CONCERNING LAW AND GRACE

What It Is About

Another question has recently been forced to the front by the Premillenarian brethren. It concerns the Christian relationship to Law and Grace. Since many are apparently disturbed with this question, we shall endeavor to state it as briefly as we can that which is involved, and also the answer of Scripture as we conceive it to be. It has been said that the man who knows the relative position between Grace and Law has the key to true theology. The relationship of the Law to myself and how it condemns me; the relationship of the Gospel to myself and how it shows me the way of salvation—these are two points which every Christian man should clearly understand. Errors on this question will bring about great sorrow that is grievous to the heart and injurious to life. To form a mingle-mangle of Law and Grace is to teach that which is neither Law nor Grace but the opposite of both.

Mistakes in Regard to Law and Grace

Very great mistakes are being made about the Law. When the Chiliast contends that this present Dispensation of Grace has nothing whatsoever to do with the Law, he makes a serious error. The Scofield Bible is wrong when it says that God offered Israel at Mount Sinai to choose between Law or Grace, and that Israel rashly and without thought accepted Law and therefore made a poor bargain.

There is no point upon which men make greater mistakes than on the relation which exists between Law and the Gospel. Some put the Law instead of the Grace and others

the Grace instead of the Law. The Premillennialist affirms that the Law is utterly abrogated and abolished and they openly teach that the believers are not bound to make the Moral Law the rule of their lives. From such Antinomianism as that may God deliver us!

Legalism Just As Bad As Antinomianism

There is another extreme view concerning Law and Grace to-day which may be termed legalism. It sprouts from the Pharisaic conception of good works as the ground for righteousness before God. This error is especially present in the Roman Catholic Church and is not entirely wanting even in our own circles. Some think that the law is the gospel and that an outward external obedience will merit for them eternal life. Such men err from the truth and understand it not. This is just as dangerous as the Antinomianism that is found among the Chiliasts.

We agree with our Banner editor when he writes: "It is as dangerous as it is easy to go to extremes in our conceptions of Biblical truth. The acceptance of the theory of the Antinomians (which the Protestant Church ever since the days of the Reformation have consistently rejected) would have grave consequences. It would lead not only to the elimination of the reading of the Decalogue from our morning services, but also to the rejection of that part of the Heidelberg Catechism in which the Ten Commandments are explained as the Christian's rule of gratitude. It would mean the scrapping of several of the Psalms in which we sing 'O how love I Thy law.' It would mean a fundamental change in our attitude toward the Old Testament."

We shall try to give the Scriptural answer to four important questions in this connection.

1. What is the meaning of "Law"?
2. Why is the Moral Law perpetuated?
3. In which sense is the Christian under the Law?
4. In which sense is the Christian under Grace?

WHAT IS MEANT BY THE WORD "LAW"?

Dr. Hodge tells us that the principal meanings of "law" are:

(1) An established order in the sequence of events. A law in this sense is a mere fact. So, for example, we know that summer follows spring and autumn the summer. This is an established order in God's creation.

(2) A uniformly acting force which determines the regular sequence of events. In this sense the physical forces which we see in operation around us are called the laws of nature. Gravitation, light and heat are such forces.

(3) Law is that which binds the conscience. It imposes an obligation of obedience upon the rational creature. This is true of the moral law in its widest sense. The word "law" already implies that there is a law-giver. Scripture uniformly speaks of law as a revelation of the will of God. This is true of the natural as well as the moral law. The ultimate foundation of all moral law is the will of God. The Old Testament word for law is "Thora" which means "instruction," because it is an instruction concerning right and wrong. The New Testament Greek word is "nomos," which means "custom," because it regulates the custom among men. Whatever controls the actions of men is called "nomos" in the New Testament. It is sometimes applied to a rule of conduct; sometimes to the Scripture as the supernatural revealed will of God, as the rule of faith and practice; sometimes to the Pentateuch or Law of Moses; and sometimes specifically to the Moral Law, (Cf. Hodge Dogmatics on Ten Commandments).

Different Kinds of Law

The Bible distinguishes between four different kinds of laws.

1) Civil Law—these applied to Israel as a nation.

2) Ceremonial Law—these refer to the ceremonies of the Old Testament which reach their fulfillment in Christ.

3) The Natural Law—of this the Apostle writes to the Romans:

"The Gentiles (says he) which have not the law (that is the revealed moral law), do by nature the things contained in the law; these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another."

4) The Moral Law, which is usually identified with the Ten Commandments.

Different Kinds of Moral Laws

1) There are laws that are founded upon the nature of God. These can never be abrogated since God's nature does not change. Under this class we speak of the Divine commandment to love God supremely, to be just, merciful and kind.

2) A second class of laws are based upon the permanent relations of man in their present state of existence. Laws concerning property, marriage, duties of parents to children, and inferiors to superiors, come under this class. These laws are permanent as long as the present relationship continues.

3) A third class of laws are founded on the temporary relationships of men or conditions of society and are enforced by the authority of God, (Cf. Hodge, Systematic Theol. Vol. 3, p. 267).

4) The fourth class of laws are those called positive. By the positive laws of God we mean "such institutions as depend only on the sovereign will and pleasure of God: and which He might not have enjoined and yet His nature have remained the same. Such was the command given to Adam not to eat the forbidden fruit; for we can easily conceive that some other test of obedience might have been given, and which, if it had been given, would have been equally binding. And all the ceremonial precepts under the Mosaic dispensation, were certainly of this description; for they have long since been actually abrogated by Christ, the Law-giver of the Church," (Green's Lectures on the Shorter Catechism, Vol. 2, p.9).

WHY THE MORAL LAW IS PERPETUATED

Are the Ten Commandments dispensed with? This is a question which the Chiliast answers in an affirmative way. To them the law has no other purpose than to bring the unregenerate to Christ. It does this by revealing to him his own depraved condition and the need of salvation. "As soon as the sinner under the guidance or tutorship of the law has arrived in the realms of grace, the law disappears out of his life forever. The Christian, being justified by grace through faith has nothing at all to do with the law. Why? Because Christ has kept the law in his stead. Right here, however, lies the fundamental mistake of the Antinomian. He fails to state in what sense Jesus Christ has kept the law for the believers. It is very true that Christ has kept the law for us as a condition for salvation, as the ground of justification, or righteousness, but this surely does not mean that He has also kept it for us as a fruit of faith and a token of gratitude to God for His salvation." (Banner Art. Nov. 22, 1929).

(1) *Moral Law Based Upon God's Nature*

The Ten Commandments are based upon the moral nature of God and the permanent relationship existing between men and consequently cannot be abrogated till these relationships cease. "The law must be perpetuated," says Spurgeon, "from its very nature. For does it not strike you the moment you think of it that right must always be right, truth must always be truth, and purity must always be purity. Before the Ten Commandments were published at Sinai there was still that same law of right and wrong laid upon men by the necessity of their being God's creatures. Right was always right before a single commandment had been committed to words. When Adam was in the garden it was always right that he should love his Maker and it would always have been wrong that he should have been at cross purposes with his God; and it does not matter what happens in this world, or what changes take place in the universe, it never can be right to lie, or to commit adultery, or murder, or theft, or to worship an idol God," (Spurgeon Metro. Taber. Pulpit, year 1882, p. 282).

It is plain that the very essence of God is involved in this Moral Law and therefore they must always be observed.

(2) *Law Was Unchangeable When First Given*

The perpetual nature of the Ten Commandments is already indicated at the time they were given. The record of this transaction is remarkable. We read: "The tables were written on both their sides; on one side and on the other were they written." In this repeated declaration it is plainly intimated that the tables were written on both sides so that nothing could be added nor taken away from the law. They were written by the finger of God to indicate that no one may erase what He has inscribed. They were written on stone to tell us that they contain perpetual and everlasting obligations.

The continued obligation which man owes to these Ten Commandments is also plain from the introduction. It reads: "I am the Lord thy God which has brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." Observe three thoughts in this connection. (1) The first reason assigned for its continual obligation is found in the words, "I am the Lord." "Lord" is the covenant name of God. God demands obedience because He is the covenant Lord of Israel and of His Church. (2) God speaks of Himself as "Thy God." God requires a continued obedience because He is our God in Jesus Christ. (3) The last reason assigned for its perpetual observance is contained in the words "I am the Lord thy God which has brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." Israel must obey God out of gratitude for the great deliverance from the Egyptian bondage. We must obey because of the still greater redemption from the bondage of sin through the blood of Christ, of which the deliverance from Egypt with the Passover is only a type.

(3) *Abolishment in Conflict With Practice of Christian Church*

The Premillennialistic repudiation of the Ten Commandments is in plain conflict with the practice of the Christian Church. Here we desire to quote from *D. L. Moody*. "Some

people seem to think we have got beyond the commandments. What did Christ say? 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.' The commandments of God given to Moses in the Mount at Horeb are as binding to-day as ever they have been since the time when they were proclaimed in the hearing of the people. The Jews said the law was not given in Palestine, (which belonged to Israel), but in the wilderness, because the law was for all nations."—Weighed and Wanting.

Spurgeon's View of This Matter

"We are not under the Law as the method of salvation, but we delight to see the Law in the hand of Christ, and desire to obey the Lord in all things. They tread dangerously upon the verge of terrible error, although we believe they are little aware of it. Alas, we have heard some who have gone much farther than this, and have railed at the Law. Oh, the hard words that I have sometimes read and heard spoken against the holy Law of God! How very unlike to those which the Apostle used when he said, 'the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.' How different from the reverent spirit which made him say,—'I delight in the law of God after the inward man.' You know how David loved the Law of God and sang its praises all through the Book of Psalms. The heart of every Christian is most reverent toward the Law of the Lord. It is perfect, nay it is perfection itself. We believe that we shall never have attained to perfection till we are perfectly conformed to it. The sanctification which stops short of perfect conformity to the Law cannot truthfully be called perfect sanctification. For every want of exact conformity to the perfect Law is sin," (C. H. Spurgeon, Metro. Tabernacle Pulpit—1882, p. 277).

(4) *Jesus Never Abolished Moral Law*

Our Lord Jesus declared that He did not come to abolish the moral law. His words are express. "Think not that I am

come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfill." And Paul adds. "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." The gospel of grace does not abolish, but vindicates and firmly establishes the law. Jesus did not change the law, but He explained it and pointed out its spiritual character. This fact shows that Jesus did not annul it because why should He explain that which no longer exists? So, for example, in the Sermon on the Mount, we see that He explained the true meaning.

(5) *Jesus Explained Moral Law*

A great deal of ceremonialism centered around the Jewish Sabbath. The Pharisees forbade even works of mercy and necessity. Jesus corrects their mistaken conception by performing many miracles on the Sabbath, in which He taught that man was not made for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath for man and that it is meant to be a day spent in honoring God and blessing men. He shows that the Sabbath rest does not consist in idleness but suggests works of piety and love by which the day is hallowed.

The Jews taught that the commandment "Thou shalt not kill," only forbade manslaughter and murder. Jesus showed that anger against a brother without a cause was a violation of this commandment. Surely this is no abrogation of the law.

The Pharisees knew that they might not commit adultery, but it did not enter their mind that impure desires already violate this commandment. Jesus showed that the thought of sin is evil and that an unclean imagination pollutes the heart. The Ten Commandments receive a new meaning in the teachings of Jesus and were certainly not abolished.

In the great summary of the law, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself," our Lord unveiled the living essence of the commandments. In other words, Jesus told us that the whole law can be summed up in love. No one will say that Jesus gives us this summary instead of the Ten Commandments. Such a

one has no conception whatsoever of Jesus' teaching in regard to the law.

To show that He did not abrogate the law, our Lord embodied the whole Ten Commandments in His life. He declares emphatically, "I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love." Point out if you can where Christ violated the law or left it unfulfilled.

(6) *To Alter God's Law Is Dangerous Work*

It must also be remembered that to abrogate or alter the law is a most dangerous work. Suppose for a moment that a man could change the Divine precepts, where would he begin and where would he end? We would ask the present day Chiliast who would abrogate these commandments, which one of the ten precepts has lost its force. Is it "Thou shalt not kill," or "Honor thy father and thy mother," or one of the others? For God to change His law would be an indication on His part that it was imperfect. The gospel certainly does not present God as one satisfied with an obedience to a mutilated law. The theory of abrogation is dangerous to the extreme.

(7) *Christian Needs Law to Convict Him of Sin*

Furthermore, recollect that the law serves to convict the sinner of his guilt. This is the first use that is mentioned in the Heidelberg Catechism. Every time the saint falls in sin he is in need of this stern pedagogue to bring him back to Christ. It is not difficult to understand that the whole system of perfectionism often accompanies the theory of law abrogation. If we maintain that the Christian is entirely free from sin and no longer needs to repeat "Forgive us our debts," as is being done to-day, we can also conclude that the law is abolished. The one is a natural outgrowth of the other. If, on the other hand, we believe that a Christian must still contend against sin and Satan through his whole life and often sins grievously to his shame, we must also believe that he is repeatedly in need of this Divine tutor.

(8) *"New Commandment" Does Not Change Law*

Jesus explained and vindicated the law from the corrupt perversions of the Pharisees, but nowhere altered it. On one occasion indeed, He said "A new commandment I give unto you that ye love one another." But where this is said "the context clearly shows, that our Lord Himself considered this commandment as new, in no other sense than as being enforced by a new motive, namely, His own example of unparalleled love to us; for it is immediately added, 'as I have loved you that ye also love one another','' (Green's Lectures on the Shorter Catech. Vol. 2, p. 12).

(9) *"If Ye Love Me, Keep My Commandments"*

At the close of His earthly ministry He stressed the doctrine of implicit obedience to the Divine precepts still more by the injunction "If ye love me keep my commandments." Christ and the Father are one and therefore the commandments of God are also the commandments of His Son. Solomon says, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." This certainly does not look as though the law is dispensed with. Paul testifies in Romans 7, "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man" and the Psalmist declares, "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day."

(10) *The Christian Obeys in Christ His Representative*

In Romans 8, the Apostle states that the moral law is completely vindicated in the believer. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," (Rom. 8:3, 4). Jesus Christ as our Covenant Head came into the world for the double purpose of bearing the penalty and at the same time keeping the law. One of His main reasons in coming was to bring in perfect righteousness. "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so

by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." The law requires a perfect life and he that believes in Jesus Christ presents it. It is not his own life but Christ is made of God unto us, righteousness. We are one with Christ. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." That which Christ did is reckoned to every one of His children and because He was righteous, God counts us righteous upon the principle of substitution and representation.

(11) *New Nature Delights in Obedience*

The law is fulfilled in us personally in a spiritual sense. You ask: "How can that be?" We reply with the words of the Apostle: "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh," Christ has done and is still doing through the Spirit, "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Through regeneration the law is fulfilled: for when a man is re-born he becomes the recipient of a new nature which loves the law of God. This new nature which God implants in every believer at the time of his regeneration is incapable of sin and cannot sin because it is born of God. The Apostle Paul when he describes his inward conflict shows that he himself, his real and best self, did keep the law, for he says: "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God." He also tells us that he delights in the law of God after the inward man.

THE CHRISTIAN NOT UNDER THE LAW

(1) *The Christian Not Under the Law As the Means of Salvation*

Someone will say, "But we can't keep the law." This is exactly where we must be. Salvation by the works of the law is impossible. The law has been completely fulfilled by our Covenant Head. We must rely upon the finished righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ imputed to us and receive it by faith alone. This doctrine so humbling to the pride of the human heart, the Apostle gloried in; and, on more occasions than one, he enters into an argument to show how utterly impossible

it is for the sinner to obtain justification with God in any other way. In the third chapter of his epistle to the Romans, he enters fully upon the subject, and winds up in this way: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." In the next chapter he presents the same idea, but in language still stronger and more decisive: "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Presenting the doctrine of justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, and that alone, in a manner so clear and strong, the Apostle was aware that some might charge him with antinomian sentiments, as if he undervalued the law; as if he had set it aside as a dead letter, and thus encourage man to continue in sin, that grace might abound. How does he meet this cavil? How does he repel this charge? With holy indignation: "Do we then make void the law through faith?" says he: "God forbid: yea, we establish the law." He insists upon it that the doctrine of justification by faith in the Redeemer, and by that alone, is a wholesome doctrine, has no licentious tendency whatever, but is the very doctrine which honors the law and secures its best obedience. "Not under the law" means that we cannot be saved through obedience to the law.

(2) *Does Not Dread Curse of Law*

The Christian is not under the law in the second place because he no longer dreads the curse of the law. "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law." The transgressors of the Divine precepts are in constant danger of judgment and condemnation. Every transgression and disobedience must receive a just recompense of reward. Now believers have no fear of punishment for their sins because their sins have been placed by God Himself upon the covenant Representative. "The chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we are healed." "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree." The Christian can even

challenge the law with the question: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" He dreads no penalty which the law might impose since "as far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."

(3) *No Unwilling Obedience*

The Christian is not under the law in the third place because he no longer grudges an unwilling obedience. Jesus speaks of the law of liberty,—"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." He no longer toils under its yoke as an unwilling servant but now readily and spontaneously renders obedience because of the principle of love which became his through the saving and regenerating influences of God's Spirit upon his heart. The Christian "stands fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free," and is not "entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

(4) *No Slavish Fear for Lawgiver*

And finally the saint is not under the law because he no longer lives in a slavish fear of the Lawgiver. As long as the sinner lives at enmity with God he dreads His divine presence and is afraid of His awful throne. The soul under the law stands as Israel did before the smoking mountain. When he hears the voice of God, it is like a trumpet lasting loud and long and he beseeches that he may hear it no more, but the believer comes to God as his Father and no longer dreads the divine wrath. For Christ's sake he has been adopted into the divine family.

WHY MUST CHRISTIANS KEEP THE LAW?

When the Heidelberg Catechism asks the question: "Why will God then have the ten commandments so strictly preached, since no man in this life can keep them?" the answer is: "First, that all our lifetime we may learn more and more to know our sinful nature, and thus become the more earnest in seeking the remission of sin, and righteousness in Christ; likewise, that we constantly endeavor and pray to God for the grace of the Holy Spirit, that we may become more and

more conformable to the image of God, till we arrive at the perfection proposed to us, in a life to come." We shall now give six reasons why the believers must obey the law.

(1) *Subject of God's Kingdom*

The first reason for obedience may be concluded from the fact that the Christian is a subject of God's kingdom. In this kingdom God is the Lawgiver. The law of this kingdom is the Ten Commandments. The Christian is enjoined by the Savior to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,—and righteousness is an attribute of God's kingdom of which he has become a willing subject. In the Lord's Prayer "Thy kingdom come" naturally leads to the next petition "Thy will be done," etc. The law observance of the Christian is different from the law observance of the Pharisee. The Pharisee obeyed the law in order to obtain reward. Against this error Jesus and the apostles constantly warn. The true disciples, on the other hand, seek first the glory of God. The norm of righteousness for the believer is found in God Himself. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Righteousness is an essential attribute of this spiritual kingdom of which the believer is a member. God's righteousness is manifest in the Ten Commandments. As a willing subject in his Father's kingdom, he is eager to obey the laws of the Lawgiver in that kingdom.

(2) *Because He Is God's Child*

The believer must render obedience to God's law not only because he is a subject of the kingdom in which God Himself legislates the law, but also because he is God's child. As a child he obeys his Father's commandments. Jesus refers to this second motive for keeping the Ten Commandments in the Sermon on the Mount, when He says: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." The interpreted meaning of this text is, "You are God's children. Therefore act and conduct yourselves as God's children so that the

world may see that you belong to Him." In this way the disciple will bring glory to the Father. As a child of God the supreme object of his choice will ever be God's righteousness. The term "righteousness" has a two-fold significance in God's Word. Through faith we obtain the forensic righteousness before God and through regeneration we receive a subjective righteousness of our own. These two are intimately related. The one results from the other. The child of God seeks this righteousness first of all; he must hunger and thirst after it and he must submit to persecution for its sake. Instead of being free from the law, the Bible pictures the gospel dispensation as one in which the law is written in his heart, (Jer. 31:33; Ezek. 36:27). Through regeneration the new principle of obedience is implanted in his heart. Because of this he does not live contrary to God's will but his life is conformed to it.

(3) *To Obtain Reward*

The Christian's obedience may also be stimulated by still a third motive and that is to obtain the reward. The idea of merit and reward in the teaching of Jesus is, however, entirely different from the Judaistic conception. Dr. Vos says: "The first thing to remember is that we have no right to declare the desire for reward as a motive in ethical conduct unworthy of a high standard of morality and therefore unworthy of the better element in our Lord's own teaching." (Vos, Kingdom of God, p. 119). When the Christian seeks the reward he moves in a very high plane. His first and supreme desire is to glorify God; and God's glory and our salvation are intimately linked up together. Through our salvation God reaches His highest glory.

The Christian, however, knows that this reward is not of merit but of grace. The Jews conceived of it as a legal necessity. The reward with them was in exact proportion to their obedience rendered. The Biblical basis of reward is, however, far from commercial. God does not give us an exact equivalent to our deserts, since we are all "unprofitable servants" even after we have done all that which God re-

quires, (Luke 17:10). We read that he who is faithful over a few things will be made lord over many things, (Matt. 24:47).

(4) *Obedience Out of Gratitude*

A fourth reason for obedience can be found in the gratitude which the Christian owes to God. The believer knows that he cannot merit salvation by keeping the law. Christ has purchased the complete redemption through His blood. After obtaining this great salvation through the precious blood of Jesus Christ, it is but natural for the Christian to show his gratitude through obedience.

(5) *"Thy Will Be Done on Earth As It Is in Heaven"*

The Christian also obeys God's commandments because he desires to do God's will on earth even as it is done in heaven. Our glorified nature shall be refined from all its dross and be as pure gold. It will be our delight in heaven to be holy. There will be nothing about us then to kick against a single commandment. We shall there know in our own hearts the glory and excellency of the Divine will, and our will shall run in the same channel. We shall not imagine that the precepts are rigorous; they will be our own will as truly as they are God's will. Our nature will be entirely conformed to the nature and mind of God and then the law will be fulfilled in us in a perfect way. Then shall the law of the Lord have eternal honor from our immortal being. This perfect heavenly holiness can never be attained in this life, but nevertheless the Christian strives to attain it, and this he does by endeavoring to keep God's commandments.

(6) *Obedience An Integral Part of Christian's Salvation*

And finally the Christian renders obedience to the law because his salvation would be incomplete without it. What is the meaning of Salvation? It not only means that we are free from the guilt and punishment of sin. This is only one half of its meaning. The other part is equally important, namely, that the Christian is liberated from the power and

dominion of sin and desires to live according to God's will. This is exactly the thought expressed by the inspired Apostle when he writes that we are not under law but grace.

It has been said that when we are saved we have nothing more to do with the law. That this is not so can be seen. Think for a moment what Salvation is. When we are saved, we are saved FROM WHAT? You answer, "from Sin" because it is written, "He shall save His people from their sins." We are, therefore, saved FROM SIN. But what are we SAVED TO? You say, "we are saved UNTO HOLINESS." Very well, but what is holiness? Holiness is CONFORMITY TO THE LAW OF GOD. Try as you will, you can never get the law out of the concept of Salvation. It is an integral part of it.

The whole text reads "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace," (Rom. 6:14). The reason why sin shall no longer rule the Christian is because he is no longer under law but under grace, in other words, he is liberated from the curse of the law and made free from the power of sin. This part of our salvation is generally designated as our sanctification. By means of regeneration a new principle of life has been received, so that the believer turns away from sin and Satan and renders a spontaneous obedience to his God. The will of God finds perfect expression in His commandments. The Christian loves the law and delights in the Divine precepts after the inward man, because he is liberated from the power of sin.

> "Sin is strong, but grace is stronger,
> Christ than Satan more supreme."

The Holy Ghost has begun a good work in the Christian and it is His rule never to leave His work unfinished. The work which His wisdom begins, the arm of His strength completes. There is in every child of God a new nature, a nature which cannot die and cannot sin. Christ calls it "a well of water springing up into everlasting life." The Apostle calls it "a living incorruptible seed, which liveth and abid-

eth for ever." Now, if this seed is incorruptible then sin cannot corrupt it; and if it abideth for ever then sin cannot expel it. If the inner life be there, and it is indeed the life of God, then sin no longer has dominion.

Chapter XI

UNSCRIPTURAL PRE-EMINENCE OF THE JEW

We now proceed to the discussion of that which may be considered one of the most difficult topics in connection with present day Premillenarianism. It concerns the Jew. What place does he occupy in God's future kingdom and in the great plan of salvation? An intelligent discussion of this important subject must naturally be preceded by a clear cut statement of the Chiliastic conception of this question. How does the Premillennialist regard the Jew?

The Premillennialist View

"Israel as a nation always has its own place and is yet to have its greatest exultation as the earthly people of God. . . . According to the prophets, Israel, re-gathered from all nations restored to her own land and converted, is yet to have her greatest earthly exultation and glory" (Scofield Bible. Note to Rom. 11). "In the days when Jerusalem has been made the center of earth's worship, the Jew will then be the missionary, and to every nation now called 'Christians,'" (Note on Zech. 8:23). The millennial kingdom we are told will be essentially Jewish. The Jew shall return to Palestine. The temple will be rebuilt and the Davidic throne will be re-established. "At that time (millennium) the ascendency of Israel will be paramount over the Gentiles," (Brock).

Their Error Can Be Understood

This Chiliastic conception concerning the position of the Jew is exactly what one would expect. One essential fact must especially be remembered in this connection. Do not

forget that Premillennialism is of Jewish origin. It originated in the Jewish writings of the future which date back even before the time of Christ. The Jews already then expected an earthly kingdom in which they would occupy the first position. They looked upon the Gentiles as an inferior class. They thought highly of themselves because they were God's people and circumcised as the children of Abraham. The Gentiles were regarded by them as polluted, condemned and accursed. This erroneous Jewish conception of the future is incorporated by the Chiliasts into their scheme of eschatology.

Pre-Eminence of Jew Inconsistent With Plain Scripture

It is certainly strange that such an error should again come to the foreground in Christian circles almost two thousand years after Christ. The present day Premillennialists distinguish sharply between Israel and the church. In the millennial kingdom the Jew will occupy a prominent position. He shall receive distinguished honors above the Gentile Christians. Now we would not place the Premillenarian brethren on the same level with the Jews of Christ's day. There is of course a vast difference. The error of the Jew was in their heart. The Premillennialists err in Judgment. They have failed to grasp the repeated scriptural warning given by Jesus and His apostles against exactly this error. That the Jew will constitute a distinct nation in the Christian church, and is to be exalted in dignity above their fellow believers is not only without foundation in the Scripture, but is inconsistent with its plainest and most important doctrines. The middle wall of partition between the Gentiles and Jews has been put away for good. The believers are one in Christ; they are all partakers of the same spirit, and in virtue of the union with Him, are joint and equal partakers of the benefits of redemption. The Gentile believers are built up together with the Jews in the same temple, (cf. Eph. 2: 11-22; Gal. 3: 27-29). Paul says there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him (Rom. 10: 12). The apos-

tolic missionaries considered the door open alike to all, and preached to both Jews and Gentiles wherever they went.

Why the Gospel Was First Preached to the Jew

Truly, our Lord says "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" and at the time He ascended He commanded His disciples to be witnesses unto Him, both in Jerusalem and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. But that is because Israel was considered a world by itself. As the Gospel shall be preached to the whole world before the final judgment, so also the Gospel was first preached throughout all Israel and then the judgment followed. The first missionary activities among the Jews and the judgment which followed, namely, the destruction of Jerusalem, is a pre-figuration of the final judgment of the world. The close connection existing between the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world can be seen from the eschatological discourses of our Lord because they are there spoken of at the same time.

Jew and Gentile on One Level

In the great commission of Jesus, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," our Lord makes no distinction between the Jew and the Gentile. Furthermore, the promise of God to Abraham, to Noah, and to Adam were not individualistic, but universalistic. They were not limited to the Jews, but included men out of every tribe and nation and tongue and people. The Jewish nation was organized at the time of Moses. If the New Testament promises are reserved for Israel after the flesh, then why are they not linked up with Moses. Paul connects the promise of the Gospel not with Moses but with Abraham, because he is the father of all believers. "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: And the father of cir-

cumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith" (Rom. 4: 11-13). The blessing of Abraham came to the Gentiles through Christ. In Gal. 3: 14 we read "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Paul declares that God is not only the God of the Jews, but also of the Gentiles, (Rom. 2: 28-29).

Jews Not Exalted Above the Rest

The Jews who persecuted the church of Smyrna are called a synagogue of Satan, (cf. Rev. 2: 9 and 3: 13). John the Baptist preached to the Jews, "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham," (Matt. 3: 9, Lk. 3: 8). When the Jews answered Jesus, "Abraham is our father," our Lord replied, "If ye were Abraham's children ye would do the works of Abraham." So also Paul says, "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel," (Rom. 9: 6). The New Testament church constitutes the true Israel of God.

Not only shall the Jews not enjoy any exalted dignity, but rather the opposite is true. They have rejected their Lord despite all the spiritual blessings they possessed. Our Lord says of them that He will destroy these wicked husbandmen and let out His vineyard to other husbandmen who will render Him the fruits in their seasons, (Matt. 21: 41). And in verse 43 He declares again that the kingdom of God shall be taken from them and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. This is precisely what happened. When Jesus was crucified the Jews cried out "His blood come upon us and our children." Jesus cursed the fig tree because He found nothing but leaves. He even said "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever." The fruitless fig tree with its abundance of foliage is a picture of the

Jewish people. The Lord wept over Jerusalem and announced the destruction of both city and temple because they had rejected Him, (Matt. 22:7). The apostle Paul pours the same judgment over Israel when He says, "Who both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets and have persecuted us; and they pleased not God and are contrary to all men." We believe it to be more than evident from the above cited passages that the Jews are not predestined to obtain a higher dignity or prestige above any other nation.

WILL THE JEW GO BACK TO PALESTINE?

An interesting question arises in this connection in regard to the restoration of the Jew to Palestine. Some Chiliasts believe the Jews must first be converted before they can return; whereas others are of the opinion that the conversion shall follow their return.

The return of the Jew to the promised land is clearly predicted in God's Word. Luthardt correctly says, "A man must break the Scripture who denies such a return," (Lehre von den Letzten Dingen, p. 71). The Old Testament prophecies predict their re-gathering in the land of promise. "After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them," (Ezek. 38:8). "Thus saith the Lord God; When I shall have gathered the house of Israel from the people among whom they are scattered, and shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the heathen, then shall they dwell in their land that I have given to my servant Jacob" (Ezek. 28:25).

Objections Answered

It has been objected against the argument taken from ancient prophecies that this would prove too much. The prophets not only predicted a return to Palestine but also a restoration of temple worship, Mosaic ritual, priesthood, sacrifices, etc. This would be inconsistent with the remainder

of God's Word as we read in the New Testament that these things have been abolished for good. Those who oppose the return of Israel to Palestine say that it is not a sound hermeneutic principle to accept part of such a prophecy as literal and reject the other part.

This refutation may first appear plausible but careful study of prophecy, however, proves that this conclusion is incorrect. We cannot lay down a hard and fast rule here. The so-called spiritual interpretation does not positively exclude the literal fulfillment. The literal and spiritual fulfillment of prophecy are often contained in one single passage. They are then frequently distinguished easily by the general context.

A second argument raised against the return to Palestine is that the land would be altogether too small to inhabit the Jews. Palestine is about the size of our state Connecticut. According to statistics there are fourteen million Jews. This objection is not serious since King Solomon ruled over a territory almost six times the original size of Palestine. In Gen. 15:18 we read: "In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates." "Besides, who shall say how thickly the land that once flowed with milk and honey may not be populated after it has undergone the up-to-date agricultural improvements? And finally, the strongest advocate of the literal interpretation of the predictions of Israel's return to Palestine does not insist that every last Jew must go. Many Jews remained in Babylon when the seventy years of the exile had expired. Yet the Jews as a people returned. Quite a number may remain in the dispersion when God gathers ancient Israel into the land promised unto Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their seed after them," (While the Bridegroom Tarries, p. 205).

It cannot be denied that the Jews as a people have been wonderfully preserved and kept in contact although they have been scattered over the whole world. They may be compared to a river that empties its waters into the great ocean

but still does not become a part of the salty sea. How different is the Jew from other nationalities such as the German, the Hollander, etc. With them the Americanization takes place in a surprisingly short time. Within a few decades all national distinctions are obliterated. In contrast with this the Jew remains apart. Undoubtedly there is a purpose in this miraculous preservation.

Attention must also be called to the present day movement which is known as Zionism. Many Jews are even now returning to the land of Palestine.

THE CONVERSION OF THE JEW

A matter of far greater importance is the promised conversion. That the Jew has been providentially kept apart from all the rest is an undisputed historical fact. What can be the divine purpose in this providential separation? Are the Jews preserved so miraculously in order to be reorganized to a great nation? This is what the Chiliast would have us believe. We believe not. Israel as an organized nation has had its day. It will not again be established as a great world power. The Jewish nation may be likened to a plant. It was sown and it grew up under God's kind, providential care. The plant brought forth the flower of rare beauty. He is called the Rose of Sharon or the Lily of the Valley. The plant served its purpose and after the coming of Christ recedes to the background. Israel as a nation had its day. The old people of Israel, however, still have a great future, far greater and more glorious than could ever be realized by being reestablished as an earthly kingdom. The Bible predicts their conversion before the end of the world.

Conversion Predicted

All the Scripture passages that have bearing upon the ultimate spiritual restoration of the ancient people of God cannot be considered here. We shall call your attention to only a few outstanding predictions. One of the most striking passages is found in Romans 11. Paul speaks of the rejection of Christ by Israel and because of this a hardening

has come over them. During the time of Israel's apostasy the Gentile church shall be brought in by being ingrafted in the same olive tree. The hardening of Israel is not absolute. There is still a remnant of the election of grace preserved by God's providence. This, however, shall not go on uninterruptedly. Israel as a people will again come to God. The conversion shall take place after the Gentile church is gathered and before the return of Christ. Paul sums it all up in these words: "That a hardening in part hath befallen Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved," (Rom. 11:25).

What is the meaning of "all Israel" in this passage? Is it the spiritual Israel, that is, the Christian church, or is it Israel according to the flesh? We grant that this is a much debated passage. Still a close and careful study of the context only leaves room for one interpretation. The term "Israel" is constantly used in this chapter to designate the Jew. It is inconsistent with the entire connection to press it into another groove here. To say that Israel throughout this chapter means the national Jew but in verse 11 designates the Christian church, is we believe, an unsound hermeneutic principle of interpretation. It cannot be denied that this passage predicts a conversion of the Jews. "There may be some doubt as to the exact meaning of these phrases. The 'fulness of the Gentiles,' however, in accordance with the usual sense of the genitive with 'pleroma,' and the almost compulsion of the context, should mean, not the Gentile contingent to the elect, but the whole body of the Gentiles. And 'Israel' almost certainly means not the true but the fleshly 'Israel.' In this case, the prophecy promises the universal Christianization of the world,—at least the nominal conversion of all the Gentiles and the real salvation of all the Jews. In any understanding of it, it promises the widest practicable extension of Christianity and reveals to us Christ going forth to victory" (Bib. Doct. Warfield, p. 624).

This Pauline prophecy is in perfect accord with that which was predicted by Zechariah. "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem,

the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon," (Zech. 12: 10-12).

Jesus wept over Jerusalem and concluded His lamentation by saying "I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," (Matt. 23: 39). In Luke 21: 24 the same promise is found. "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Israel shall receive great spiritual blessings after the Gentile church has been gathered.

WHEN WILL THIS CONVERSION HAPPEN?

When will this great conversion take place? This is an inquiry which we need not answer. The disciples asked a similar question, "Lord wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" Jesus replied: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power." For us it is sufficient to know that the glorious spiritual kingdom of which Jesus spoke so much shall be restored to Israel before the end comes. In Acts 3: 19 we read: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." The Jews must first be converted before Christ comes and the restitution of all things takes place.

Israel's return to the promised land and the coming conversion seem to be vitally related. Ezekiel says: "For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I

cleanse you," (Chap. 36:24, 25). This should encourage our missionary activities among the Jews. In this great work of the Lord the church should always abound because we know that also in this our labor will not be in vain in the Lord. The signs which herald the close of this present dispensation seem to be upon us. With Prof. Kuiper we say, "The hardening of Israel is its penalty for the killing of the Prince of Life. Because that sin was so very heinous, the penalty is severe. Long, very long, will Israel's hardening continue. It will last clear to the last days. Of all the nations of the earth Israel will be the last to find the Christ. Yet Israel's sin was not the unpardonable. 'I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers,' says Peter—Acts 3:17. Did not the Savior Himself, while hanging on the tree, make intercession for the transgressors in the words: 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do'?—Lk. 23:34. The Father, who always hears the Son, will grant this petition in the last days," (Kuiper, "While the Bridegroom Tarries" p. 220).

Chapter XII

THE THOUSAND YEARS AND THE ATTENDING EVENTS

THE CHILIASTIC PICTURE

According to the Chiliast the millennial kingdom will be ushered in at the coming of Christ. This will be a period of great prosperity and blessedness. The saints will be raised and together with the believers which then dwell upon the earth will become the recipients of great glory. Jesus will reign as king and Jerusalem will be the metropolis and seat of His government. Peace and righteousness shall prevail.

The Jew shall be instrumental in bringing about a great conversion among the Gentiles. There will be a magnificent display of God's power, righteousness and wrath. This shall be a potent factor in bringing the world to acknowledge Jesus as Messiah. The mercies of the Lord shall be showered upon the church in great abundance. The redeemed shall rejoice. Nature shall undergo a change so that the lamb and the lion will dwell together. In short, God will be honored and Christ will be magnified.

Such a glowing description of the future has a measure of appeal and attraction for everyone. Upon a close investigation, however, we discover that it is based upon fancy and imagination. It is without scriptural foundation. To be sure every Christian looks forward with joyful anticipation to Christ's return. The final kingdom will then be established. We also believe that that event is associated with unprecedented blessings. The blessings which Scripture associates with Christ's coming are by no means inferior to anything contained in the Chiliastic picture of the kingdom on earth. We believe that Christ will then usher in a new heaven and

a new earth in which righteousness will dwell in the absolute sense. Sin and death shall be no more. Christ's church will be redeemed and glorified and God shall be all in all. We shall now briefly consider the principal Scriptural objections against the fanciful description of the Millennium which the Chiliasts hold before us.

OBJECTIONS AGAINST SUCH AN AGE OF BLESSEDNESS

(1) *Gospel Is Ordained Means for Conversion*

Our first objection concerns the anticipated period of conversion which is to be brought about by the sudden manifestation of God's power and anger. This we believe to be entirely unscriptural. In Romans 1:16 we read: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." According to the Chiliast the written Word of God is to be substituted for something else. The world saved through an outward display of power! This is certainly a departure from God's ordained way of saving mankind. It is a strange doctrine indeed, because it teaches a different kind of salvation than that which Jesus promised and that which the apostles proclaimed.

(2) *Now Is the Time of Salvation*

This doctrine proclaims a post-gospel salvation subsequent to Christ's coming. The Scripture declares that "Now is the day of salvation." What else can be the meaning of II Cor. 6:2? Peter writes that the delay in fulfilling "the promise of His coming" is because God does not wish "that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

(3) *Church Complete at Christ's Return*

At Christ's coming the church shall be complete. It is this whole beloved, ransomed and purified company which Christ will present to Himself a glorious church without spot or wrinkle. Paul says, "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might

present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish," (cf. Eph. 5:25-27; John 6:39, 44, 54, 56; I Thess. 3:13). No one will be added after Christ's coming.

(4) *No Means of Grace After Christ Comes Back*

With the advent of Christ the soul-saving work shall come to an end. Premillennialism maintains that the saving of souls shall go on after Christ's return. If this is so we shall find the means of grace surviving the event. But it can be easily shown that both the written Word of God and the sealing ordinances (Lord's Supper and Baptism) have their whole end and object exhausted at Christ's coming. They will positively cease as means of grace either to bring about conversion or to strengthen the faith of the saints. They cannot bring about any more conversion since the Church, as has already been said, is then complete and perfect; and they will not be means for the strengthening of faith of the redeemed because their faith is then perfect and needs no further strengthening. The whole work of the gospel ministry both in its missionary and pastoral spheres embracing the making, baptizing and the training of the disciples; together with Christ's mediatorial power as it is now manifest in the presence of the Holy Spirit, are to terminate at Christ's return. Peter tells us that the Word of God is intended for this dispensation. "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts," (II Pet. 1:19). Through the power of this same Word the believers are begotten again, (I Pet. 1:23). The Lord's Supper likewise, as a means of grace shall cease. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death *till* he come," (I Cor. 11:26). The great commission to make disciples of all nations as it is found in Matthew 28 indicates that baptism as well as preaching shall not continue after the coming of Christ which is here designated as the end of the world or the consummation of the age.

The parables of the Mustard Seed and of the Leaven give us quite a different picture. The kingdom of God is not introduced by a mighty catastrophe but rather enjoys a steady and gradual growth. Also here we must distinguish carefully between the present kingdom which now is and the final consummation of the kingdom at Christ's coming. The parables, of course, refer to the present kingdom.

(5) *Undervaluation of Gospel by the Chiliasts*

At the coming of Christ all further saving of souls shall come to an end. This view disparages the gospel when it maintains that the conversion of the world will continue after Christ's return. The commission to the church is to preach the gospel to every nation and to every creature. This gospel according to the plain teaching of Paul is the only means to salvation, (Rom. 10: 11-15). Wrath, judgment, or any display of glory are not designed for the conversion of souls, nor are they adapted to that end. The soul-saving work shall be carried on, "not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit saith the Lord." When Paul says "Behold now is the accepted day of salvation," he means now is the very harvest time itself, in which the field is being reaped.

(6) *Great Conflagration at Christ's Coming*

Instead of introducing a period of general conversion Scripture speaks of the great conflagration that shall go with Christ's coming. Peter says: "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent

heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness," (II Pet. 3:7, 10-13). We read in the Book of Revelation: "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them," (Rev. 20:11). "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea," (Rev. 21:1). The Premillennial theory will never survive the reception of these passages in their plain and obvious sense. They speak of a general catastrophe to take place when Christ appears the second time. It is utterly inconceivable for this to happen before the so-called Millennium.

(7) *Christ's Return Called "The End"*

There will be no more salvation because Christ's coming is habitually called "the end"; and presented as the termination of all endeavor to save men. In I Cor. 15 we read of "the last trump" sounded when Christ comes back. The last trump surely means that it is final. The apostle Paul declares that the state of the believers is determined when Christ comes back. "Waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye be unreprovable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 1:8). In I Cor. 15 we are told that the end comes after Christ has put to naught the last enemy which is death. This enemy is completely conquered at the time of the resurrection of the saints. Christ shall then give this kingdom back to the Father. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power." This proves that no thousand years intervene between the resurrection and the end.

(8) *This Gospel Dispensation is the Last*

Another passage which sheds light upon the whole subject is found in Heb. 1:1, 2: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers

by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." Here the days of the gospel of Christ are designated as "the last days." Peter speaks of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost in the same way. "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams" (Acts 2:16, 17). This plainly indicates that the present dispensation of the Spirit is considered in the Bible to be "the last days." Likewise the same apostle writes concerning Jesus as the Lamb of God without blemish and without spot,—Who "was manifest in these last times for you" (I Pet. 1:19, 20). The apostle John says with characteristic emphasis "Little children, it is the last time" (I John 2:18). And Paul, when he speaks of the things which befell the Israelites in the wilderness said, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (I Cor. 10:11). And in Hebrews we read: "Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9:26).

(9) *Judgment Immediately After Christ's Coming*

Another argument against the continued conversion after the second coming is found in the fact that the judgment of the world coincides with the coming of Christ. The Chiliasts maintain that many shall find Christ during the thousand years and that the general judgment comes after the Millennium. The Bible says that Christ's coming and the judgment of the world go together.

(a) In Matt. 13 we read "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (vs. 41, 42). "And cast ye the unprof-

itable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (vs. 50). In Matt. 25 Jesus also connects His coming with the final judgment. Observe that this final judgment is then immediately followed by eternity. Jesus' coming, the final judgment and the beginning of eternity coincide because the judgment scene closes with these words: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matt. 25:46).

(b) In these passages nothing is said of a thousand years intervening between the two events. The righteous and the wicked will be judged together and both at the coming of Christ. In Matt. 10:32 and 33 and Mark 8:38 we read that the acknowledgement of the one class and the disowning of the other class will take place at the same time; namely, "when Christ comes in His glory."

(c) In the parable of the Wheat and the Tares we read at the harvest, which is the end of the world, the reapers gathered the tares together to be burned in the fire. "And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13:37-49).

(d) The same truth is expressed in the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins. When the bridegroom came the wise virgins were prepared to meet him and they that were ready went with him to the marriage; and the door was shut. Afterwards came also the foolish virgins and said, "Lord, Lord, open to us." But the bridegroom answered and said "Verily I say unto you, I know you not." The thought is, that after the Lord comes to judge there is no more hope for salvation. The Chiliastic conception of a continued conversion of the world after Christ's coming is in direct variance with these teachings of our Lord.

(e) The great commission of Matt. 28 closes with the promise "Lo I am with you alway even unto the end of the world." This is co-existent with "make disciples of all nations." The plain inference is that when the world is evangelized through the preaching of the gospel the end cometh. Jesus encourages His disciples to carry out the great com-

mission with the promise of His presence. He is present with the church in the world evangelization till the end. After the end the preaching of the gospel ceases as a means of salvation. The theory of a post-gospel salvation after Christ's second coming certainly meets with insurmountable difficulties in the face of these passages.

(f) The same truth repeatedly occurs in the letters of Paul. Christ's coming is so identified with the idea of judgment that he admonishes his readers to "judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come," (I Cor. 4: 5). "In harmony with this, every passage in which the Second Advent is adverted to in these Epistles conceives of it pointedly as the Judgment Day. The Apostle's eager desire for the purity and sanctification of his readers is always referred to the Advent: he wishes to have them to boast of before the Lord Jesus at His coming (I Thess. 2: 19),—he prays that their hearts may be established unblameworthy in holiness before God at the coming of our Lord Jesus (I Thess. 3: 13),—he beseeches the God of peace to preserve them in their whole being and all their faculties blameless, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (I Thess. 5: 23)—he declares that the Day of the Lord will bring sudden destruction upon the wicked (I Thess. 5: 3) and will draw a sharp line in justice between the good and bad (II Thess. 1: 9). He speaks of the Advent freely as the 'Day of the Lord' (I Thess. 5: 2, 4; II Thess. 1: 10), a term which from Joel down had stood in all prophecy as the synonym of the final judgment," (Warfield Bib. Doct. p. 603).

(g) That Christ's coming and judgment are simultaneous is also evident from the connotations "the Day of the Lord," "the Day." The idea of judgment was so much associated with Christ's return that the word "Day" is actually used by Paul synonymous for judgment. "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but

he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (I Cor. 3: 13-15). In I Cor. 4: 5 we read: "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God." Dr. Vos says of this: " 'Day,' while employed of the parousia (second coming) generally, is, as in the Old Testament, mostly associated with the judgment, so as to become a synonym for judgment (cf. Acts 19: 38; I Cor. 4: 3). The phrase is found in Mt. 7: 22; 24: 36; Mk. 13: 32; Lk. 10: 12; 17: 24; 21: 34; Acts 2: 20; Rom. 13: 12; I Cor. 1: 8; 3: 13; 5: 5; II Cor. 1: 14; Phil. 1: 6; 2: 16; 1 Thess. 5: 2, 4 (cf. vs. 5, 8); 2 Thess. 2: 2; 2 Tim. 1: 12, 18; 4: 8; He. 10: 25; 2 Pet. 3: 10," (Inter. Stand. Bib. Encyc. p. 981).

(10) *Christ's Conquest Complete*

According to the Chiliastic theory Christ shall come back to conquer the world and to subdue His enemies. All this shall take place during the millennial age. The Bible however teaches that all conflict will be over when Christ comes back. The enemies have been made a footstool of His feet. The subduing of the Anti-Christian forces is not a protracted process extending over a long continued period of a thousand years. The conquest is already going on at the present time and will be completely accomplished upon His return. In Heb. 10: 12 we read: "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool." Peter tells us in Acts 3: 21 that the restitution of all things shall take place at Christ's second coming.

(11) *Sin and Death Will Not Continue*

Another significant feature of this millennial age according to the Chiliasts is that sin and death shall continue. They concede that these will be somewhat checked in their ravaging power but still are not entirely abolished. "This world will during that dispensation still be the abode of men in

the flesh. This is expressly foretold. Even though it will be a period of unprecedented holiness and happiness neither sin nor death will be wholly excluded" (Begg). The Bible, however, teaches that the last enemy, i.e. death, will then be conquered.

(12) *Condition of Glorified Saints too Exalted for Earthly Millennium*

That which claims our most serious consideration in regard to this point is the condition of the saints after their departure. We wholeheartedly agree with Vos when he writes, "For it will be observed that what the Christian life anticipates is according to the above survey, in each case something of an absolute nature, something pertaining to the consummate state. No matter with what concrete elements or colors the conception of a Chiliastic state may be filled out, to a mind thus nourished upon the first-fruits of eternal life itself, it can, for the very reason that it must fall short of eternal life, have neither significance nor attraction," (Vos Art. Pauline Esch. and Chiliasm Pr. Th. Rev. 1911).

What a sorrowful contrast does this supposed millennial kingdom with all its external glory and pomp, present to that state of immaculate perfection and eternal glory into which the godly enter at death. The heavenly bliss which the believers will then enjoy is infinitely superior to the most glowing representation of an earthly kingdom here below. Surely this glorified state of the saint must be in perfect harmony with all that surrounds it. Because of this it would entirely be out of place if it should be brought back to this world of sorrow and sin. This would certainly be an anticlimax because the condition of the soul in heaven is far more glorious than anything that can be hoped for in this sinful world.

(13) *Supposed Millennium Inconsistent with Christ's State of Exaltation*

If this is true of the saint it is still far more true of Christ Himself. He is now in the exalted state. For Him to

come back to a sinful earth for another thousand years would be a deep step of humiliation after His glorious exaltation. All this is fatal to the so-called "millennial age of prosperity." The Chiliast has far too low an estimation of the heavenly glories into which the saints are ushered immediately after death, and the exalted position of the Savior. How is it possible to make up a world that is composed of men, some with ordinary physical bodies and some with resurrected bodies? We cannot conceive how it is possible for the glorified saints to come down from heaven to live again in the midst of these sinful environments.

(14) *Will the Bloody Sacrifices Be Restored?*

Another attending event of this millennial era is the resumption of bloody sacrifices. This is the prevailing opinion of the Chiliasts. Damarest says "That sacrifices will be continually offered by the Levites in behalf of restored and sanctified Israel is expressly declared and no disregard to the statement, no objection to the predicted fact, can alter the text of the prophet (Ezek. 40-48) or make a language prophecy a prophecy by symbol." To this the Scofield Bible adds, "Doubtless these offerings will be memorial, looking back to the cross; as offerings under the old covenant were anticipatory, looking forward to the cross."

All this is an innovation. It was certainly never accepted by the Christian Church. The forefathers have always regarded the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross as final. Jesus uttered the words "It is finished." This means that the types and symbols of the Old Testament had all reached their fulfillment in His atoning sacrifice. The Apostle explicitly states in the letter to the Hebrews that the Old Testament sacrifices have been abolished for good. The new dispensation is here compared to the old. The author especially contrasts the high priesthood of Christ with that of Aaron and declares that Christ's priestly office is far superior because He has made an end to the bloody sacrifices by offering Himself once upon the cross.

(15) *Do We Expect Prosperity Before The End?*

Once more the idea that before the end of the world the church is to enjoy a long period of blessedness and rest and have God's bounties showered upon it is inconsistent with the plainest teachings of the Scripture. We are repeatedly and distinctly told that her history from the beginning down to the time when she shall reach her final and eternal consummation shall be one of trouble and affliction. This is the evident meaning of Jesus' eschatological teachings. This is also the doctrine of the Apostles when they declare that not many wise after the flesh nor many mighty and not many noble are called, and that the believers must expect trials and tribulations here below (I Cor. 1:26; Rom. 8:36). In the letter to the Hebrews, the saints are described as strangers and pilgrims who are looking for a city that hath foundations whose builder and maker is God. In Philippians we read that their citizenship is in heaven from whence they also expect the Savior.

The New Testament nowhere teaches that the church on earth shall attain to external power or glory. The opposite is clearly expressed. The opposition of the world shall increase in the same proportion that the power of the gospel shall become manifest. The age before the end of the world is everywhere painted in the blackest colors. The days of the Son of Man are likened to the days of Noah and Lot. Materialism and immorality shall prevail. Iniquity shall abound and the love of many shall grow cold. The apostasy shall even enter the church of Christ to such a fearful degree that Jesus asks the question, when the Son of Man comes shall He find faith on earth. False Christs and false prophets shall arise and perform signs and wonders to seduce if it were possible even the elect. The Antichrist shall make his final appearance and Satan shall be let loose for a little while.

That this is the meaning of the Savior's discourses concerning the end cannot be doubted. In Matt. 24 the disciples asked Him privately when these things should take place. "And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came

unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matt. 24:3). Here Christ's coming is compared with the end of the world. No mention is made of the intervening thousand years. Jesus answers the question of the disciples as to the signs that shall precede the end of the world. The destruction of Jerusalem is compared with the end because it is a prefiguration of the same. These two are connected in these discourses of Jesus. One is a picture of the other. These texts are sufficient in themselves to condemn the entire Chiliastic scheme of eschatology. The end of the world will not be preceded by the millennial era of prosperity and blessedness but will be heralded by inconceivable woes and tribulations and a fearful apostasy.

Chapter XIII

THE TWO-FOLD RESURRECTION ERROR

Another characteristic feature of Chiliasm is their theory of two resurrections: the first at the coming of Christ will be the resurrection of the believers, or, as some believe, of the martyrs, and at the end of the millennial reign comes the resurrection of the rest of the dead, that is, the general resurrection. This view is principally based upon Revelation 20:6, but the Chiliast also claims to find it in other passages of the New Testament. The other passages generally mentioned in this connection are: Acts 3:19 to 21; I Cor. 15:23 to 28; I Thess. 4:13 to 18; II Thess. 1:5 to 12; and Phil. 3:10 to 14.

PASSAGES EXAMINED

Let us now examine these passages and see whether they contain this doctrine or not. *In Acts 3:18 to 21,* we read: "But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." The Chiliasts here maintain that the "times of refreshing" brought about by the coming of Christ is the inauguration of the Millennium in which the restitution of all things shall take place. After this has come about Christ will once more come for final

judgment. This interpretation therefore pre-supposes two comings of Christ. "The correct view is that the seasons of refreshing and the times of the restitution of all things are identical (both shall take place when Christ comes back). The present tense in verse 21 'must receive' does not indicate that the reception of Christ into heaven still lies in the future, but formulates a fixed eschatological place, namely, that after His appearance Christ must withdraw into heaven till the hour for the Parousia (second coming) has come," (Vos, Art. on Esch. of N.T. Inter. Stand. Ency. p. 620). Through repentance the Jews can become recipients of the blessings that accompany Christ's second coming. Peter therefore tells the Jews to repent, that their sins may be blotted out, in order that they may partake of the "seasons of refreshing"; but Peter does not declare that they shall share these "seasons of refreshing." The sole condition of their participation depends upon repentance. This is in perfect harmony with the parallel passage found in Matthew 17:11, "And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things."

PAULINE PASSAGES

We now turn to the Pauline passages. *In I Cor. 15:23 to 28:* "But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." The Chiliasts imagine to find substantial proof here for a two-fold resurrection, namely, the resurrection of the righteous and the resurrection of the wicked with a period of time

intervening. They say, each one in his own order: the first order is the resurrection of the righteous, the second order the resurrection of the wicked, and then follows the end. A careful reading of this text gives us an entirely different meaning.

1. In the first place it is evident from the whole context that Paul is not speaking of the resurrection of the ungodly at all. He is only speaking of the resurrection of the righteous. When he writes, "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption," etc., he certainly limits the resurrection to the righteous.

2. The Chiliasts say that the phrase "in Christ all shall be made alive" includes the wicked as well as the righteous. We maintain that the wicked are not "in Christ." The Bible never speaks of the unrighteous as being "in Christ." This term is strictly limited to God's children. Hence Paul is only speaking of the resurrection of the godly in this passage.

3. The Chiliast says each in his own order: the first order is the resurrection of the godly; the second order is the resurrection of the wicked; then comes the end. The Apostle says each shall rise in his own order. Christ the first-fruits is the first order—then those of Christ at His coming, which is the second order, and then comes the end. Paul here says that the resurrection of the righteous is immediately followed by "the end." No mention is made of the resurrection of the wicked nor of a thousand years of prosperity in between.

4. The Chiliasts say that the word "order" can't be applied to Christ since it means "division" or "group" in a military sense in the original. We declare that it certainly can be applied to Christ and has meaning only when it is applied to Christ. Christ's resurrection was a great display of divine power and the coming resurrection of the righteous can be spoken of as the second order because they rise through the power of Christ's resurrection. These two orders in the resurrection both display the great power of God.

5. The Chiliasts maintain that the word "order" also refers to the element of time. We answer in the words of

Warfield, "The word 'order' does not in the least imply succession: but means 'order' only in the sense of that word in such phrases as 'orders of society.' "

6. The Chiliasts say, "The end here refers to the end of the resurrection which is the resurrection of the wicked that occurs one thousand years after the resurrection of the righteous." We believe that the phrase "the end" is nowhere used in that way. "That 'the end' should mean the end of the resurrection is not brought out in the context. Still further, such an interpretation of this word stands entirely without parallel in the Scripture. The term 'the end' is a perfectly definite one with a set and direct meaning. From Matt. (e.g. 24:6-14) throughout the New Testament and in these very epistles (I Cor. 1:8; II Cor. 1:13, 14) it is the standing designation for the end of the world or the end of the ages. It is illegitimate to press it into any other grove in this passage," (cf. Warfield, Biblical Doctrines, p. 622, and Vos, Pauline Esch.).

7. The Chiliasts teach that Christ "puts down all rule and all authority and power" during the thousand years of the Millennium. We answer the whole idea of the Millennium is absent from Paul's mind. The great conquest of Christ over the powers of evil is now going on. Jesus said while yet on earth, "I have overcome the world." The triumphant Christ is pictured in the Book of Revelation as riding on the white horse and going forth conquering and to conquer. The complete victory will reach its consummation at the end. In Romans 11 we read that the fullness of the Gentiles shall then enter in and all Israel shall be saved. In this passage of Corinthians we read that Christ shall give His mediatorial kingdom back to the Father when the last enemy is destroyed, which is death. This takes place at the resurrection of the righteous we are told at the end of this chapter. The resurrection of the righteous, which marks the final overthrow of the last enemy, which is death, is designated as the end, and the time He shall give the kingdom back to the Father.

The Premillennialists also quote *I Thess. 4:13-18* to

support their idea of a double resurrection. Paul writes to sorrowing Christians at Thessalonia that they are not to sorrow as the Gentiles. "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." The Chiliasts argue that the Thessalonians sorrowed excessively because they feared that their dead would not have part in the first resurrection and the Millennial blessings that follow. Certainly no unbiased exegete could ever come to such a conclusion. The whole context teaches something entirely different. The Thessalonian Christians were sorrowing excessively over their departed loved ones like the heathen that "have no hope." Now, says the Apostle, you are doing wrong in this. The Christian's sorrow is different from the grief of the world because they have the comforting hope that their dead are with the Lord." The sorrow of the Thessalonians did not center around the thought of an earlier or later resurrection, but was of far deeper character. It is likened to the Gentiles who have no hope. With the Thessalonians it was a question of resurrection or non-resurrection, and not of earlier or later resurrection.

The argument that the Thessalonian Christians certainly could not doubt the general belief in the final resurrection since Paul must have preached it to them, which is urged by the Chiliast, is deplorably weak. It is true that Paul had labored among the Thessalonians and must certainly have spoken of the resurrection, but remember that the same is true of the Corinthian church. In spite of Paul's clear-cut teaching in regard to the resurrection doctrine at Corinth, there were some in that church that doubted. Why should this be impossible in the church at Thessalonica?

In the 16th verse we read: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first." The Chiliast immediately adds in his imagination "and the dead without Christ shall rise last." But this is again an importation. In this part the resurrection of the believers is not contrasted with the resurrec-

tion of the unbelievers but is contrasted with the living Christians at Christ's return, who shall meet the Lord in the air. In this whole chapter there is no reference made to the resurrection of the ungodly whatsoever.

Another vain attempt to find a trace of the two-fold resurrection is made by the Chiliasts in their exegesis of *II Thess. 1:5-12.* It is claimed that those of the Thessalonians who endured tribulation shall be partakers of the kingdom of God, which the Chiliasts interpret to mean the Millennium. "This passage, however, merely contains the general thought that suffering and glory, persecution and inheritance of the kingdom are linked together, and has nothing to indicate that the glory and kingdom is anything else but the final state, the kingdom of God, (cf. Vos, Art. Pauline Esch, P. Theo. Rev. p. 52).

The Chiliasts also make a determined effort to read their theory of a double resurrection in *Philippians 3:10-14.* It is said that Paul longs to be conformed to the death of Christ, that is, to suffer martyrdom in order that he might be a partaker of the first resurrection. They conclude this from "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." Paul, they say, can attain to this first resurrection by suffering martyrdom. The resurrection of the martyrs would then be the first resurrection, whereas the other believers would have to wait for the general resurrection at the end. "In the epistle to the Philippians it is more impossible than any where else to reconcile the alleged Chiliastic elements with the fundamental structures of the writer's eschatology. According to Phil. 3:20, 21, Paul makes the parousia (second coming) coincident with the change of body not merely for himself, but for all believers," (Class notes of Pauline Esch.—Vos). Therefore, Paul does not look for any special privilege for himself or other martyrs. The condition upon which Paul bases the attaining of the resurrection cannot be martyrdom as it would have no sense to assure his readers that he had not yet attained. Paul here refers to the general grace of the resurrection glory which all believers shall enjoy. This is in accord with the general trend of Paul's

teaching elsewhere (Rom. 8:17; II Cor. 4:10; II Tim. 2:12; cf. Pauline Esch., Vos).

THE TWO-FOLD RESURRECTION NOT FOUND IN SCRIPTURE

The interpretation we have put upon these so-called Chiliastic passages is in perfect harmony with the rest of the Scripture. The doctrine of the general resurrection of the dead is found in both Old and New Testament.

(1) *One Resurrection in Old and New Testament*

In Isaiah 26:19 we read: "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." The prophet Daniel says: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." (Dan. 12:2). The Chiliast must look in vain for their expected thousand years that lies between the two resurrections of the godly and the ungodly. The Old Testament is entirely silent upon this point. The only conclusion that any careful exegete can gather from these passages is that there shall be only one general resurrection at the last day. No trace of a Chiliastic background can be found.

This same truth is plainly disclosed in many New Testament passages. Jesus says: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (John 5:28, 29). The thought of an intervening period of a thousand years between the two resurrections is entirely foreign to this passage. Jesus speaks of the resurrection of the godly and the resurrection of the wicked as taking place at the same hour.

(2) *The Resurrection of the Dead Is Everywhere Placed at the "End"*

The Bible teaches that it shall be at the last day. The "last

day" can only mean that it is the end of time. In connection with the resurrection of Lazarus at Bethany, Martha avows her faith in the final resurrection. Martha connects the resurrection with the "last day" and not with the beginning of the thousand years. In John 6, the Lord identifies the resurrection with the last day three times. Dr. Warfield said of this, "Just because it is the last day it cannot be succeeded by any days, or time, or season whatever. That closes what is called 'this world' or 'this age,' and then comes the age to come, which we commonly call eternity," (The Gospel of the Second Coming, Bible Mag. Apr. 1915, p. 37).

(3) *Only One Resurrection Mentioned*

In *Acts 24:15* Paul speaks of the resurrection of the believers and unbelievers. "And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." No mention is made of two resurrections. The word "resurrection" is in the singular number. How can anyone conclude from this passage that there are two resurrections? The Apostle certainly speaks of only one.

(4) *No Thousand Years Between Resurrection and Judgment*

The Scripture also plainly teaches that the resurrection of the saints is to take place at the day of judgment and in connection with that event, (Matt. 24:30, 31; 25:31-46; II Thess. 1:7-10). The acknowledgement of the saints and the rejection of the ungodly is expressly said to take place at the same time, (Rev. 21:7-8; 22:12-15; Matt. 16:24-27; 7:21-23). The admission and the exclusion is to take place simultaneously "at that day." In the parable of the Wheat and the Tares we read that they are both gathered at the harvest, therefore at the same time. Likewise the separation takes place at the same time, (Matt. 13:30-43).

In John 5:28-29 the resurrection and judgment are placed together in the same "hour." It is hardly possible to find a plainer statement of the simultaneousness of the resurrection of both classes than this.

(5) *Christ's Second Coming Is Called "the End"*

The completion of Christ's conquest over the foes is identified with "the end," (Matt. 24: 6-14; Mk. 13: 7; Lk. 21: 9; I Cor. 15: 24). In Matt. 24: 3 ff. the second coming and the end are treated as single events. Peter also defines the time of our Lord's return at the end of the world and the consummation of all things. (I Pet. 3: 4-8; II Pet. 3: 10). Dr. Warfield says, "The second event is represented primarily in the aspect of judgment. Christ's coming is indeed so sharply defined as the day of judging in the mind of Paul that he advises his readers to judge nothing before the time until the Lord comes (I Cor. 4: 5). The connotation of 'the day of the Lord,' was to Paul so entirely judgment, that the word 'day' had come to mean 'judgment' to him and he actually uses it as a synonym, speaking of a 'human day' for 'human judgment,' (I Cor. 4: 3; 3: 13-15). 'Each man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire; and the fire itself shall prove each man's work of what sort it is,' " (Prophecies of St. Paul, in the Expositor July, Aug. and Dec. 1886, pp. 54). The Chiliasts must subject these and other passages to the most unnatural and inconceivable exegesis to bring them in harmony with their preconceived conception of the millennium.

Chapter XIV

THE THOUSAND YEARS IN REVELATION XX

We shall now take up Revelation XX, upon which the Chiliast especially based this doctrine. In the discussion of this chapter we must keep in mind that the Apocalypse is conceded by all to be an obscure book. This is proved by the diversity of explanations which exist not only between commentators of different classes, as rationalists and orthodox, but between those of the same class and even the same school. This remark may be applied to the whole book, but especially to the passage under consideration. The general rule that obscure passages must be brought into harmony with plain, rather than vice-versa, must here again be put into practice.

Order of Time Not Always Observed in Revelation

It is urged that the sequence of the visions places the millennium spoken of in Chapter 20 after the return of Christ narrated in Chapter 19. But the question of historic sequence in Revelation is difficult to decide. It is a recognized fact that the prophet and also the writer of Revelation does not always follow the order of time. If the chronological order of events be consistently maintained in this part of Revelation the results will be fatal even to the Chiliastic interpretation, because the solemnization of the bride's marriage with the Lamb is here placed subsequent to the millennium and even subsequent to the general resurrection. After the period of conflict is entirely closed and the final rewards have been dispensed, we read that the Holy City appears descending out of Heaven as a bride adorned for her husband, (21:2). In 19:7 the time for the marriage has come, but not the actual realization of

it. The inconsistency of the Chiliasts can be seen in that they maintain the historic sequence in the first part of the vision but must reject it in another part.

SAFE METHOD OF INTERPRETATION

Of this Chapter Kliefoth says "Because the so-called millennium is included in its compass it has been more than any other part of the book tortured by tendency-exposition into a variety of divergent senses." To this Warfield adds, "This is undoubtedly true: but in reprobating it, we must not permit our understanding of so obscure a portion of Scripture to be effected by the clearer teachings of its more didactic parts. . . . . Within due limits, surely, the order of investigation should be from the clearer to the more obscure. . . . . Nothing indeed, seems to have been more common in all ages of the church than to frame an eschatological scheme from this passage, imperfectly understood, and then to impose this scheme on the rest of the Scripture."

A few introductory remarks must be made as we approach this chapter. Do not forget in the first place that the whole conception of the so-called millennium is found nowhere else in the Bible besides Revelation 20. We must come to this chapter of the Bible with the positive faith in the absolute infallibility of Scripture. One part of Scripture cannot contradict another part for "Scripture cannot be broken." It contains one organic revelation of God's plan of salvation. Now if the whole question of the millennium is of such momentous importance as the Chiliasts declare, it is certainly more than strange that we do not find the remotest trace of the whole idea in any other part of Scripture.

The Old Testament scheme of the future, even though it is not developed as far as that of the New Testament, is nevertheless complete in all of its parts. In all of the books of the prophets, in the Psalms of David, as well as the other portions, no mention is made of the thousand years of prosperity. The whole idea of the millennium is foreign in the Old Testament Scripture.

This same truth stands upon the foreground in the esch-

atological discourses of Jesus. If the eschatological plan of Premillennialism affords such great comfort to the Christians then it must surely be regarded as an inconceivable fact that our Lord Jesus Christ passes it by in silence. The idea is not only absent in everything that the New Testament teaches concerning the future, but is positively in conflict with its plainest teachings. Revelation XX contains nothing that is out of harmony with the general eschatology of the Bible, for the simple reason that its predictions of the future are identical with the remainder of Scripture.

FACTS TO BE REMEMBERED

Certain primary facts must be constantly remembered in the interpretation of the Apocalypse. Without having these facts in mind a clear understanding of this passage is impossible. In the first place, we must know the great purpose of this book. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (I Tim. 3:16). This part of God's Word answers a specific purpose. We agree with Dr. Kuiper in his recent publication "The Consummation of the Age," that this Book has a two-fold design. The Lord instructs His church in regard to two things. First, God's people must remember that there is a perpetual conflict in this dispensation between the righteous and the unrighteous, the church and the world. This enmity between the seed of the woman and the serpent dates back to man's fall and shall continue until Christ returns. In the second place, the church must know that her final destination is not in this world. The church must pitch her tents toward the portals of eternity. In this world nothing abides. It is true that the church has a solemn calling and an awful responsibility but nevertheless, God's great plan with her shall reach its ultimate and perfect realization in eternity.

The great design of this last Book of the Bible is not to satisfy the vain curiosity of mankind relative to the future events. Much less is it to be a means to excite bitter schism and hatred among the brethren, but rather to arouse God's

people to action and to make known unto them the plan of salvation.

In approaching this chapter we must also keep in mind the principle of symbolism. Says Warfield: "The principle of symbolism. That is to say—as is implied,—indeed, in the simple fact that we are brought face to face here with a series of visions significant of events—we are to bear continually in mind that the whole fabric of the Book is compact of symbols. The descriptions are descriptions not of the real occurrences themselves, but of symbols of the real occurrences; and are to be read strictly as such" (Bib. Doctrines, p. 645).

To this we would add with great approbation the words of Philip Mauro: "The language of this Book for the most part is not that of common life. It is the language often used by the O. T. prophets, in which the meaning is conveyed mainly by symbols drawn from nature, or from human affairs. Therefore a knowledge of common language will not carry one very far in the interpretation of this Book. One must know the meaning of the symbols found in it, which are many and of extraordinary variety. The first verse notifies us that the Book is written in the language of signs; for it is there stated that Christ sent and 'Signified' it, that is, communicated it by signs, to His servant John."

In the Apocalypse the various numbers have a symbolic significance. The numbers 7, 3, 4, 144,000, 666, and others, are symbolic figures. So for example, the number 7 is God's number in the Bible and expresses the idea of infinite perfection. This number is frequently used here. We read of the seven churches, the seven spirits, seven golden candlesticks, the seven stars, seven angels, the seven lamps, seven seals, etc. The same is true of the number 3. We read of "three measures of barley for a penny," "the voices of the trumpet of the three angels," "three unclean spirits like frogs," "the great city divided into three parts," "on the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates." It is more than plain

that we must be guided by these general principles of interpretation as we come to this section of the Book.

The General Features of Chiliasm Are Altogether Lacking

A careful study of these verses will reveal at once that the whole Chiliastic scheme of the future is entirely wanting. Not a word is said of the return of the Jews to re-establish an earthly kingdom. The glowing Chiliastic pictures concerning the rebuilding of Jerusalem with the restoration of the temple service and the ceremonial laws, are not only lacking but entirely excluded in the context.

Nothing is said in this Book concerning the pre-eminence of the Jew above the Gentile Christian or the re-establishment of the middle wall of partition which according to Paul was broken down by Christ. The Christian church is spoken of as the spiritual Israel and the Jews that harden themselves in their continued unbelief are called the synagogue of Satan, (Rev. 2:9). The Jerusalem which John sees is in heaven and we are expressly told that there was no temple in it. The Holy City comes down to earth not before but after the so-called millennium. We do not read of its descent in Rev. 19 but in Rev. 21.

The scene of the life and reign of the faithful saints is not on earth but in heaven. No reference whatsoever is made to the earth. The thrones which John sees are in heaven. The souls of the martyrs are spoken of as being in heaven, (Cf. Rev. 6:9; 7:9, 14, 15; 11:12; 14:1-5; 18:20; 19:1-8). Neither does John make any mention of a bodily resurrection that precedes the millennium and of another bodily resurrection that follows it. Such a two-fold resurrection is never spoken of in the Scripture. The Apostle John does not see the bodies at all. Mention is only made of the souls. Neither does John say that the souls were raised or quickened. We only read that they lived with Christ and reigned with Him a thousand years. The translation that is found in many Bibles that the rest of the dead lived not again till the thousand years were finished, is incorrect. It should read the rest

of the dead lived not until the thousand years were finished. There is no reference to the resurrection whatsoever.

The living and reigning of the souls of faithful saints is contrasted with the not living of the rest of the dead and this is called the first resurrection. We see immediately that the first resurrection here is not the resurrection of the body but rather the living and reigning of the souls of the righteous, (Cf. Bavinck Dog. IV, p. 754 ff).

Thus far we have seen that the Apostle is not only silent upon all the main features of the Premillennial scheme, but what is of still greater importance, that the whole idea is entirely wanting.

WHAT DOES REV. 20 TEACH?

We have already observed that this passage contains no trace of Chiliasm. Now you ask "What does it teach?"

It is of essential importance to begin by observing the immediate context of this passage. In the foregoing chapters the seer witnesses the struggle between the church and her enemies. Three great enemies are mentioned: the dragon, or devil; the beast, and the false prophet. From Rev. 13 we learn that the designation "beast" symbolizes the Antichrist's power in the political realm. We read of his having "seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy." The "false prophet" describes the Antichrist in his ecclesiastical power. In chapter 19 we have the beginning of Christ's triumph over His opponents. The beast and the false prophet perish. "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone," (19:20). This 19th chapter contains a vivid picture of the complete victory. The whole conquest is described in symbolic language. The imagery of war is seen everywhere. The Son of God gains His triumph by the sword. This is, of course, not a literal warfare since the sword proceeds out of the mouth of the Son of God. "In fine, we have

before us here a picture of the victorious career of the Gospel of Christ," (Warfield, p. 647, Bib. Doc.).

The third foe of Christ is the dragon, which is Satan. His destruction is reserved for chapter 20. The great theme of this portion is the overthrow of Satan. It is preceded by the overthrow of the false prophet and the beast in chapter 19, and is immediately followed up by the scene of judgment. This whole section gives us a vivid picture of the condition of the souls of the believers after the bodily death and before the resurrection. This millennial peace and blessedness which the saints enjoy is hedged in by war. The war which immediately precedes it in chapter 19 terminates with the conquest of the false prophet and the beast, and the war which follows ends with the final destruction of the Devil. Warfield correctly says that this millennial peace is thrown up against the background of war.

The Binding of Satan

This chapter is introduced with a picture of the binding of Satan. "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years," (Rev. 20: 1, 2).

The literalism of Chiliasm must immediately make room for the symbolical method of interpretation. That this portion cannot be explained in a literal way is first of all evident from the context. The conquest of Christ over the two opponents, namely, the beast and the false prophet which is described in the preceding chapter, cannot be interpreted in a literal way. Every thought of a natural war with swords and spears is excluded by the thought that the sword of the Conqueror proceeds from His mouth. The sword is not the weapon of warfare, but rather the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The symbolical method of interpretation is also the only logical method for this chapter. Satan is not bound with an ordinary chain of iron or brass. Satan is a spirit. Such a material conception of the binding of Satan leads us entirely

amiss. The binding of Satan for a thousand years is the symbolical figure used to teach us that his power is completely broken for a season. The thousand years of Chapter 20 cannot be taken literally any more than the other numbers used in the Book. The uniform use of the various numbers is figurative. So for example, 6 is the number of man; 3 and 7 are the numbers of God. The number of man, 6, is one less than the number 7, which is perfection and it is used three times in 666. Therefore man's number is almost perfection. This perfection, however, cannot be conceived of in the ethical sense. As in the days before the flood man's progress was almost entirely in the realm of inventions, so also just before the coming of Christ, humanity shall make rapid progress toward reaching the mark of perfection itself in the sphere of invention and science.

From this passage in Revelation we learn that Satan is bound in a two-fold sense: in the relative sense and in the absolute sense. With respect to the nations he is not bound completely. The result of this binding is that he can deceive the nations no more. In regard to the saints he is bound in the absolute sense. The glorified souls are entirely beyond his dominion.

(1) What does it mean when we read that he shall deceive the nations no more? To answer this question we must first determine how the term "nations" is used in Scripture. Already in the Old Testament this designation is used for the Gentile people as distinguished from the Israelites. In the Old Testament dispensation the Gentiles were deceived by Satan. Salvation was particularistic and limited to God's chosen covenant race. With Christ's death and resurrection a new era set in. Satan was bound by Jesus during His earthly ministry. Think of Jesus' triumph over him in the wilderness temptations and of the devils that were cast out by the power of Christ during His earthly ministry. Jesus declared that all the power was given unto Him in heaven and on earth. To Him was given the power over the prince of darkness. The complete triumph over the devil was attained by His death and resurrection. One of the immediate results is the great

commission to evangelize the world, (See Matt. 28). This is linked up with the Messianic declaration, "All the power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth." God's kingdom shall now be established within the hearts of men. This spiritual kingdom is set up through the proclamation of the gospel of Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation. Subjects of this kingdom shall be gathered from every nation and tribe and tongue and people. Satan is bound so that he cannot hinder this glorious design of Christ. Under God's providence Satan still possesses a great power but all this is used in vain when it comes to the ultimate realization of God's plan. The consummation of the church is not effected by the fruitless efforts of the prince of the world. Satan is bound in a limited sense so that he can deceive the nations no more. Or, in other words, so that he cannot frustrate the establishment of Christ's kingdom among the various nations of the world.

(2) The binding of Satan in connection with the redeemed souls of the saints which John sees is still more encouraging. With respect to the glorified saints Satan is bound in the absolute sense. He can no longer destroy their peace nor interfere with their perfect blessedness.

In the second place, John sees the thrones. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison," (Rev. 20: 4-7).

This we believe, is a picture of the souls of the saints in the intermediate state. John here sees the disembodied souls of the redeemed in heaven during the time intervening between

their death and the resurrection of the body. This period is spoken of as lasting a thousand years, which is the symbol of complete perfection.

"There is, indeed, no literal 'binding of Satan' to be thought of at all: what happens, happens not to Satan but to the saints, and is only represented as happening to Satan for the purposes of the symbolical picture. What actually happens is that the saints described are removed from the sphere of Satan's assaults, the saints described are free from all access of Satan—he is bound with respect to them: outside of their charmed circle his horrid work goes on. This is indicated, indeed, in the very employment of the two symbols, 'a thousand years' and 'a little time.' A 'thousand years' is the symbol of heavenly completeness and blessedness; the 'little time' of earthly turmoil and evil. Those in the 'thousand years' are safe from Satan's assaults; those outside the thousand years are still enduring his attacks. And therefore he, though with respect to those in the thousand years bound, is not destroyed; and the vision accordingly requires to close with an account of his complete destruction, and of course this also must needs be presented in the relative form of a release of Satan, the gathering of his hosts and their destruction from above" (Warfield Bib. Doc. p. 651).

PICTURE OF THE INTERMEDIATE STATE

(1) *The thousand years,* like so many other expressions in the Apocalypse, must not be taken literally but rather as a symbolism of absolute perfection. "The sacred number seven in combination with the equally sacred number three forms the number of holy perfection, ten, and when this ten is cubed into a thousand, the seer has said all he could say to convey to our minds the idea of absolute completeness" (Warfield-Millennium and the Apoc. Princeton Theol. Review, 1904, Oct., p. 608). In this same article Dr. Warfield says, "The picture that is before us here, is, in fine, the picture of the 'intermediate state' of the saints of God gathered in Heaven in order that they may securely await the end." That this period of a thousand years must be taken figuratively can

also be seen in Ps. 90:4; II Pet. 3:8; I Cor. 15:24, 25.

(2) Notice again that John does not see the bodies. We read only of their souls. The Chiliasts depart very far from their pretended literalism when they make "souls" stand for bodies. What John sees is exactly that of which we read so much in God's Word. "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Rev. 14:13). This passage in Revelation just as the above cited Scripture portion, pictures to us the intermediate state of the soul.

(3) The Seer beheld "the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the Word of God." Must the word "beheaded" be taken in a literal sense here? If so, the number of saints whose souls John saw must be comparatively small. Even the Chiliasts do not care to stress their literalism at this point. The great majority of the martyrs who sealed their faith with their blood met with death in a more dreadful way. We agree with Milligan that the word "beheaded" has the same significance as slaughtered in the vision of the souls under the altar. It is a general term that expresses the suffering and tribulation which the saints endured. The word "beheaded" is not limited to those who died the death of the martyrs. That would exclude the apostle John himself since he is the only apostle that died a natural death. Every Christian, however, must endure scorn and even persecution of the world. It has been well said, "For in the eyes of John all the disciples of a martyred Lord are martyrs. Christs' church is a martyr church. She died in her Master's service and for the world's good" (Milligan, The Expositors Bible—The Book of Rev. p. 182 and 344). "These reigning saints," says Dr. Warfield, "are now described as 'souls'—a term which carries us back irresistibly to Rev. 6:9 where we read of the souls of them that had been slain for the Word of God resting underneath the altar" (Bib. Doc. p. 652).

(4) We also read of the saints that they occupy the thrones. The Seer sees "thrones and them that sat upon them

and judgment was given to them." Man was originally created after God's image to rule over the creation of God. This dominion was lost by sin. Christ, the second Adam, comes to restore that which was lost in Paradise. The kingship of Adam occupied a central place in his state of innocency. Man was given to have dominion over the beasts of the field and over the fowl of the air. In Jesus Christ the saints are again restored to this exalted position which was lost by the fall. Man's kingship is partially restored in this life but shall be perfect after his departure. The disembodied souls are placed upon thrones to rule with Christ. This means that man's kingship which was lost in Paradise is again completely restored in heaven, even though its full consummation is attained after the resurrection.

(5) We read that they *"reign and live with Christ."* This verse reveals the relationship of the redeemed children of God to the blessed and glorified Lord. They live with Him and they reign with Him. A more intimate fellowship with Christ in glory is hardly conceivable. Paul expressed the desire to depart and to be with Christ which is far better. To the Thessalonian Christians that sorrowed for their departed loved ones he writes, "And so shall we ever be with the Lord. Comfort one another with these words." Jesus says, "Because I live ye shall live." This fellowship between Christ and the believer shall reach its complete consummation in heaven.

This period is spoken of as a thousand years. The thousand years as previously mentioned, embodies the idea of completeness. When Satan is bound a thousand years the meaning is that he is in complete subjection. Here the saints' reign is spoken of as lasting a thousand years,—that is, it describes a complete and absolute state of perfection.

(6) The Apostle also says that *"judgment was given unto them."* This is in perfect harmony with the teachings of Paul. We read that the Christian has been judged in his Lord Jesus Christ. The handwriting of our sins against us is blotted out for good. The Apostle in Romans 8 glories in the blessed fact that no one can bring any charge against God's elect. To the Corinthians he writes that they shall judge the angels and

therefore may not judge one another. Because the Christian has passed through death and judgment in Jesus Christ, he has "judgment given unto him."

(7) *"On such the second death hath no power."* In another section of this Book the Seer imparts the same truth concerning the redeemed when he says "him that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." The second death is the same as eternal perdition. The saint must still submit to the first death. But this death, which is the corporal death, has lost its sting because the sting of death is sin and this is blotted out by the blood of Christ. The second death cannot touch the perfected saints in glory. "To say that 'the second death' has no power over the saints of whom he is here speaking is to say at once that they have already been subjected to the 'first death,' which can mean only that they have suffered bodily death, and that they are 'saved souls' with their life hidden with Christ in God. That is to say, they are the blessed dead—the dwellers in the 'intermediate state' " (Warfield Bib. Doc. p. 653).

(8) It is predicted of these saints that they shall be *"priests of God and of Christ."* Before the fall man was endowed with the office of priest. The redeemed in Christ are again anointed to this office which was lost through the fall. The priesthood of the believer in this present dispensation is still imperfect and polluted with sin, but it shall come to its perfect completion in heaven.

(9) This intermediate state of glory of the disembodied souls of the saints is summed up as being *"the first resurrection."* We have already pointed out in the beginning of the chapter that this can't be applied to the bodies of the saints since John is only speaking of the souls. The contrast which is here made between the saints and "the rest of the dead" also excludes this idea, since we do not read that the rest of the dead lived not *again*. We read that they lived not until the thousand years were finished. This excludes the idea of their resurrection. If we should read that the rest of the dead lived not again then we would have a parallel between the righteous and the unrighteous but this parallel is entirely absent in the

original. The term "resurrection" is not by any means limited to the raising of the body in Scripture. It often denotes regeneration. So for example Paul writes to the Ephesians, "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved). And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," (Eph. 2: 5, 6).

(10) That the judgment spoken of in verse 12 is the final judgment seems to be obvious as it concerns the "dead both great and small," and that not only the wicked are summoned to appear is seen from the fact that the book of life is also employed, and it is only those names that are not found in the book of life that are cast into the lake of fire. "The second death is undoubtedly the lake of fire," (Warfield, above Art. p. 610). We interpret "the binding of Satan for a thousand years" to refer to the first eschatological conquest of Christ over the powers of evil, which was brought about through His suffering, death and resurrection, as distinguished from the renewed activity to be displayed by Satan toward the end. That Satan shall again be let loose for "a little while" is in perfect harmony with the eschatological discourses of Jesus in which He also predicts a period of tribulation and persecution immediately before the end comes. Our Lord says of this time that the powers of Satan will be let loose, "as false Christs and false prophets shall arise, and shall show signs and wonders to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect." These prophecies, in our opinion are repeated in Revelation when John says "And Satan shall be let loose for a little while." Just before the second coming Satan will be let loose for a little while.

In this short resume of Rev. 20 it has not been our purpose to solve all the problems of the Apocalypse, but only to show that the eschatology found in Revelation is not in contradiction with the eschatology of the rest of the Scripture. It certainly is not necessary to subject the other plain passages of God's Word to the most unnatural exegesis in order that they might be brought in harmony with a literal interpretation of this passage.

Chapter XV

THE DOCTRINE OF THE LAST THINGS AND HOW BIBLICAL ESCHATOLOGY EXCLUDES PRE-MILLENNIALISM

The purpose of this chapter is to give a brief survey of the doctrine of Eschatology or the end as it is revealed in the Bible and to show that the entire scheme of the premillennialists is out of harmony with the whole structure of Eschatology as we find it revealed.

The term Eschatology refers to those things that are connected with the final state. Webster defines it as "the doctrine of the last or final things, as death, judgment and the events connected therewith." The term is used, therefore, with two different meanings: first, it may mean the doctrine of the last things, and as such it is one of the departments of Dogmatics; and in the second place eschatology may mean the last things themselves,—the body of events which are connected with the final state or the end. In dealing with the subject of eschatology we shall use the term mostly in the last sense.

Christ's Coming Is Presented as the Beginning of the End in Bible

To-day when a man writes a book on Systematic Theology he comes to eschatology last. The point of view is to make eschatology the consummation of soteriology. In our treatment of theology we take up first the doctrine of God—theology; then the doctrine of man—anthropology; then the doctrine of Christ—Christology; then the doctrine of salvation—soteriology; then the doctrine of the church—ecclesiology; and then finally, as a sort of appendix, a few chapters are added on eschatology.

The early Christians however, occupied a different viewpoint. They came to Christianity from the Old Testament. Now in the Old Testament the Messiah is an eschatological figure. His coming and His work is placed in the sphere of eschatology. This is especially true of the prophets. For them eschatology begins with the coming of the Messiah. We can see this for instance in the famous second chapter of Joel. Joel there directly links the outpouring of the Holy Spirit with the great eschatological crisis at the end of the world. "And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of Jehovah cometh." 2:28-31. In the prophet's mind the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was a definitely eschatological event, and he connects it immediately with the sun being darkened and the moon being turned into blood. The connection is not chronological because they are separated by almost 2000 years. The prophet was not interested in the chronology of the events. What he does indicate very clearly is that they belong logically together. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit was an event in eschatology.

Now the early Christians had absorbed this point of view. For them eschatology began with the coming of the Messiah. Since the Messiah had come they felt that they stood in eschatology. Consequently they looked upon everything from an eschatological viewpoint. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath *in these last days* spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds" (Heb. 1:1). "Little children, *it is the last time*: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time" (I John 2:18).

The Structure of Paul's Eschatology

Paul considered the whole Christian life in the light of the final salvation. Paul shared this viewpoint of the early Christians. For him eschatology had already begun and was then a present reality. Eschatology for Paul was not merely something that lay in the future, but it was something that had its beginning in the coming of Christ.

For him the present state and condition of the believer is in a measure eschatological. That this is so can be shown quite clearly.

CHRIST'S CROSS AND RESURRECTION CORRESPONDS TO SAINTS' JUSTIFICATION AND REGENERATION

According to Paul, there are two great events in the present experience of the believer. They are regeneration on the one hand and the forgiveness of sins and the adoption into the family of God on the other hand. These are the two focal points in the present experience of the believer.

Correspondingly, there are two great events in eschatology. They are the resurrection and the judgment.

(1) *Connection Between Christ's Crucifixion and Saints' Justification*

The one great focal point in the present experience of the believer is the forgiveness of sins. Here again Paul has borrowed a term from eschatology to describe it. He speaks of it as a Judgment. He calls it "Justification." In other words, in Justification, the judgment has in principle taken place for the believer. The Judgment is projected into the present experience of the believer.

(2) *Connection Between Christ's Resurrection and Saints' Regeneration*

Now it is very noteworthy that the term "regeneration" does not occur in Paul's writings. Neither does he speak of being born again, which is the same thing. This is found

especially in John's gospel. Paul does have the idea but he does not use that term. When Paul describes regeneration he borrows a term from Eschatology to do so. He calls it a "resurrection." "We are raised with Christ into newness of life." "Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with Him through baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life," Rom. 6:4 ff. In regeneration the resurrection has in principle taken place in the believer. The resurrection is projected forward into the present experience of the believer. Regeneration is an event that links the believer with eschatology.

We see therefore that through regeneration and Justification the believer becomes in principle a partaker of eschatology. Henceforth he belongs to the eschatological world. "Our citizenship is in heaven" says Paul. Eschatology has in principle begun in the believer. It is not merely something that lies in the future for the believer. For him it has begun already.

CHRIST'S CROSS AND RESURRECTION CONNECTED WITH SAINTS' JUDGMENT AND RESURRECTION

Now we can carry this back even farther, and show that in Paul's view the life and work of Christ belonged to eschatology. In the life of Christ, again, there are two great focal points, namely His death and His resurrection.

(1) *Connection Between Christ's Cross and Saints' Judgment*

The one focal point in the ministry of Christ is the crucifixion, in other words the death of our Lord. There is also still another focal point in eschatology namely the judgment. Now Paul also connects those two. Usually of course he looks upon the death of Christ as atonement. He regards it from the point of view of the forgiveness of sins. Sometimes, however, he looks upon the death of Christ from another point of view. He links together the cross and the judgment. In Col. 2:15 he

says that in the cross God despoiled principalities and powers and has made an open show of them. He regards the death of Christ as an act of judgment on the spiritual forces and powers. In Rom. 8:3 Paul says that sin has been judged in the cross. The death of Christ was an act of condemnation. He condemned sin in the flesh. In other words, the judgment began in the crucifixion of Christ. What is reserved for the unbelieving world until the end of time, Christ bore for us upon the cross. When Christ was crucified it was an act of judgment on the part of God—the judgment falling not on the sinner but upon Christ who stood in their stead. In the death of Christ the judgment, which is an eschatological event, projected itsclf into the present.

Now this was not merely an outgrowth of Paul's mind to regard the death of Christ as an event in eschatology. Any one who carefully reads the gospel accounts can hardly escape the same conclusion. What do we have? The sun darkened, the earth quaking, the rocks rent, the graves opened. Don't you feel that you are standing on eschatological ground? Those are events that we connect with eschatology.

(2) *Connection Between Christ's Resurrection and Saints' Resurrection*

Now the resurrection of Christ, in Paul's view was not an isolated event. On the contrary, the resurrection of Christ is organically connected with the final resurrection at the end of time. Paul states this most clearly in I Cor. 15:20: "But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep." This expression is derived from the custom among God's people to bring the first fruits of the harvest as a sacrifice to God. At the time of Pentecost they took the first sheaves of the harvest to present them to the Lord. Paul here compares the resurrection to the harvest, and he says that Christ is as it were an early sheaf—the firstfruits—which is presented to the Lord.

The first fruits were a part of the harvest. When the firstfruits were gathered the harvest was begun. There were

not two harvests: the first one when the firstfruits were gathered in, and the second one when the rest was gathered in. It was all one harvest. It was all of one piece. Now, says Paul, that is the relation between the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of the believer. The resurrection began when Christ was raised. Christ's resurrection is of one piece with the resurrection at the end of time. In other words, the resurrection—an eschatological event—began in the resurrection of Christ. Eschatology has projected itself into the present.

There then you have the Pauline representation. In eschatology there are two great events: the resurrection and the judgment. In the ministry of Christ there are two focal points—his resurrection and his death. Now the resurrection of Christ is organically connected with the resurrection at the end of time and the death of Christ is connected with the judgment. The resurrection and the judgment have projected themselves into the present and have become a present reality in the resurrection and death of Christ.

The believer, through regeneration becomes a partaker of the resurrection life of Christ, and through justification becomes a partaker of the judgment that fell upon Christ in his death. In other words, the believer, being united with Christ, stands on eschatological ground.

This Is Not Post-Millennialism

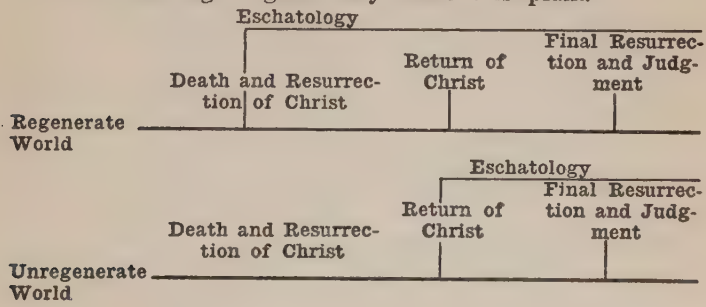
To some it may seem that this approaches the Post-millennium position. This is, however, not the case. To our mind there is nothing more foolish than what popularly passes as the post-millennium view. There are some people who think that this world is gradually getting better and better until at last it will be perfect, and then perhaps Christ will return. There are some who deny even that. Now nothing could be quite so senseless. Let us suppose for a moment that every man and woman and child and infant in this world were converted. We do not mean seemingly so but really so. Suppose they were all truly regenerated. Surely that is the most that the most optimistic post-millenar-

ian could hope for. But brethren, even then sin would not be out of the world. Every Christian must sadly testify that there is enough of it left in him. You can never get sin out of the world that way. A divine interposition is necessary before this world will ever reach perfection.

REGENERATE AND UNREGENERATE WORLD SHARPLY DISTINGUISHED

We must always remember that Paul was a bi-chotomist. I do not mean with reference to the constitution of man—whether man is composed of soul and body or soul body and spirit. I mean that Paul was a bi-chotomist in his philosophy of history. He divided the whole world into two parts—the regenerate and the unregenerate. He has his own words for it. He calls it Spirit and Flesh. Now for the regenerate world—those who have become partakers of the death and resurrection of Christ—eschatology has already begun. But the unregenerate world remains unaffected by this. For the unregenerate world there is no eschatology until Christ returns. In other words, with reference to the Christian the coming of Christ is post-eschatological. Eschatology has already begun for him. For the unregenerate the coming of Christ is Pre-eschatological. For them eschatology does not begin until after Christ returns. The resurrection and Judgment belong to the present experience of the believer. For the unbeliever they lie in the future.

The following diagram may make this plain.



For the regenerate world, to which the Christian belongs, eschatology has already begun. The death and resurrection of Christ are eschatological events. The believer, through regeneration and justification becomes a partaker of the resurrection life of Christ and the benefits of His death. Therefore, the believer, being united with Christ, now already stands on eschatological ground.

The unregenerate world is not affected in a redemptive way by the death and resurrection of Christ, and therefore, for the unregenerate world eschatology lies entirely in the future.

This statement must be qualified in one respect. The believer in his present condition is related to both of these divisions. On the one hand he is regenerated and justified and shares with Christ in His resurrection life. On the other hand he is still attached to this sinful world. Within the believer is still the struggle between spirit and flesh. Whereas, therefore, in principle the believer belongs to eschatology—Paul even says that we are seated with Christ in heavenly places—yet in reality he is also partly outside of it. The present state of the believer, therefore, is only semi-eschatological. For the consummation of it we must wait until the return of our Lord.

ESCHATOLOGY THE GOAL OF REVELATION

The supreme purpose of God in His special revelation is to restore the communion between Him and man. This is the one design of the whole process of Revelation and this is the very goal of Christ's redemptive work. Fellowship with God is the essence of Heaven. Separation from God, or the opposite of fellowship, is the essence of Hell. When Jesus comes back he will say to the redeemed "Come unto me" and to His enemies "Depart." The saved will enjoy an unbroken fellowship, whereas the ungodly will endure an eternal separation.

In order to establish this principle so as to make it clear we must go back to the earliest disclosure which God made

to man. Before the fall intercourse between God and man was uninterrupted and immediate. There was an abiding presence of God with man in paradise. The Garden of Eden is "The Garden of God." It was the place where man and God had fellowship. The garden was not in the first instance an abode for man as such, but specifically a place for the reception of man into fellowship with God in God's own dwelling-place. The correctness of this conception of paradise is verified by its recurrence in eschatological form at the end of history. Heaven is called the paradise of God. In other words, Heaven is the place of communion in the absolute sense of the word. Especially in the book of Revelation we see that the heavenly paradise is a habitation of God where He dwells in order to make man dwell with Himself.

In this sacramental fellowship between God and man which antedates the Fall and will be revealed again at the end of time we find both the principle and the purpose of all revelation. The principle of revelation is the self-disclosure of God to man by immediate intercourse, and its purpose is to restore and bring to its consummation that perfect communion between God and man, which was symbolized in the garden by the Tree of Life. Communion with God is life in the deepest sense of the word. The Garden of Eden was the place of this mutual communion and fellowship. The Tree of Life was located in the very center of this place of communion, and consequently it is called "The Tree of Life." The term reoccurs in the book of Revelation. Heaven is the place of Life. This tree of life is again found in Heaven, because it is the place of fellowship.

THIS SUBLIME PURPOSE EVIDENT IN THE HISTORY OF REVELATION

We have already said that in all revelation of God there is an organic development. God first gave His truth in seed form, not complete but nevertheless perfect. Just as an acorn is not imperfect because it is not an oak, so also God's earliest revelation was perfect though incomplete. Germinally the whole Gospel was given to Adam. Fellowship between

God and Adam was again restored after the fall. But this communion had not as yet reached its full height. It is organically developed. This was also necessitated by the redemptive purpose which God had from the start. Just as in the progress of Redemption there is organic unity, so also in revelation there must be organic development. This is so because the two move side by side.

Before the fall there was fellowship between God and man. This communion was broken by the entrance of sin. God however again placed Himself on the side of man. He is willing to restore this fellowship cut off by sin. This cannot be done except through atonement for the transgressions committed. Therefore, He promised to restore this communion through the Messiah that was to come. The seed of the Woman would triumph over sin and Satan, through the bruising of His head or suffering, and restore the communion. God walked with Enoch. All further revelation tends toward the realization of this design.

In the Angel of Jehovah we find the first expression of this principle. God comes again to walk with man, to speak with him and to disclose to him His gracious purpose of redemption. The revelation through the Angel of Jehovah was the beginning of the fulfillment of the principle of fellowship between God and man which underlies all revelation as its motive and final purpose. For that reason this Angel is also called *"The Angel of the Covenant" because the very essence of the Covenant of Grace is communion between God and man.* It is true the fulfillment was only partial, but it prophesied of a better day when the habitation of God shall be with man, "and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God," (Rev. 21:3).

In the Mosaic period we reach a new stage in the progress of revelation. During this period revelation centers in the Name of Jehovah, the Face of Jehovah, and the Glory of Jehovah in the pillar of fire and cloud.

We observe, however, that the theophanic principal in revelation continues. (By theophanic we mean the manifes-

tation of God to man through actual experience). Jehovah's Name and Jehovah's Face and Jehovah's Glory in the Shekhinah are equivalent to Jehovah Himself.

The close fellowship with God which dates back to immediately after the fall and afterwards continues in the Patriarchal age in the revelation through the Angel of Jehovah, is continued in the Mosaic period in the revelation through the divine "Name" and the divine "Face" and the divine "Glory." The angel of Jehovah has set its stamp upon the entire Mosaic revelation. The principle of self-disclosure through personal manifestation which it embodies is the regulative factor in all the revelation which follows.

Turning to the prophetic period we sense immediately that we have entered into a new stage in the development of revelation. The general trend of revelation is from the external and tangible to the internal and spiritual. Something of this can already be discerned in the Mosaic period. There the Angel of Jehovah no longer appears in human form, but in the symbol, as in the burning bush on Mt. Horeb, (Ex. 3:2). This is also true of the other forms of revelation in this period. In the prophetic period this development is even more striking. The physical and the symbolical alike are displaced by the spiritual. The prophets, above all in the Old Testament, were men who "spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:21).

This sublime purpose of fellowship with God is evident in the whole forward movement and development of God's revelation. It reaches its final fulfillment in the incarnation, When God, through the Messiah, gave a full disclosure of His nature and purpose. All revelations of God in the Old Testament are prophecies of the final revelation of God in His Son.

We cannot stop here however. This principle of theophanic, covenant fellowship which is the fountain of all revelation is at the same time also itself the goal of all revelation. The final purpose of revelation is to restore man to the immediate presence of God. We have observed that this fellowship was in a measure already enjoyed before the

fall when man dwelt in the Garden of God. Even there, however, it had not reached its highest stage. Man had not yet attained access to the Tree of Life. The Tree of Life was associated with the higher and unchangeable, the eternal life to be secured through probation. Because of that, the Tree of Knowledge stands next to the Tree of Life in the Garden. This indicates that life and probation go together.

After the Fall the immediate association between God and man was no longer possible on account of sin. God, however, had a purpose of redemption and therefore He comes down to man in self-disclosure and revelation. The goal of revelation lies exactly in the consummation of this principle of intimate fellowship. Revelation and redemption therefore go together. John EXPRESSED this thought in the book of Revelation when he saw that the purpose of God with man was to restore him to the garden of God where he would once more be restored to the immediate fellowship with God and would obtain access to the Tree of Life,—"and He showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. . . . And on this side of the river and on that was the Tree of Life."

Jesus came for the consummation of revelation as well as redemption. In Him we find the final fulfillment of the idea of fellowship which lies at the basis of all revelation. God in former times spake through the prophets in the last days through the son, (Heb. 1:1). This principle had received initial fulfillment in the Angel of Jehovah. Because of this He is called the Angel of the Covenant. This principle is continued in all later revelation. All this, however, was but prophetic. It looked forward to the time when the word which was God Himself would be made flesh and dwell among us. Even then, however, he came into the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. The full and complete consummation still lies in the future when he "shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for Him, unto salvation," (Heb. 9:28). Then shall he lead the Redeemed to the goal which laid in God's purpose from the beginning, that they should dwell with Him in the Garden of

God, "And there shall be no curse anymore; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein; and His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face," (Rev. 22:3, 4).

We see, therefore, that the principle which underlies all revelation is Messianic. In and through the Messiah we attain the culmination of fellowship and union with God, which is the source and goal of all revelation. *This is the very essence of the covenant of grace.*

SALVATION ALREADY IN THIS LIFE

In this life the Christian receives a foretaste of the heavenly bliss. Paul says that we have received the first-fruits of the Spirit. The fellowship with God is restored in principle by the Holy Spirit which dwells in us. Christ's resurrection from the dead is the first-fruits of the general resurrection that follows. It is the beginning of the harvest which has now already begun. This resurrection of Christ as the beginning of eternal life already here in principle works in the believer. As was said before, the believer was judged in principle when Jesus died on the cross and he is also raised in principle when Christ rose from the grave. In John 15 we read of the mystical union between Christ and the believer as being analogous to that of the branch and the vine. As Christ lives, so those who partake of His life through the Holy Spirit also live. Because I live, ye live also, He says. "He that hath the son hath life, and he that hath not the son hath not life."

The salvation begins in this life. Simeon says "My eyes have seen Thy salvation." Our Lord said, "He that hath seen me, hath seen Him that sent me." The Apostle Peter declares, "We already rejoice here with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

The final consummation of this fellowship still remains for the future. "For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away with," (I Cor. 13:9, 10). The transition shall take place at the moment of death. The death of the saint is only a transition from this life to glory. The

Christian with Paul is often in a straight betwixt the two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ which is far better. For the Christian who has received the first fruits of the spirit on this side of the grave and who receives the salvation as far as his soul is concerned, immediately at his departure, nothing short of heaven itself can satisfy and agree with his blessed state. A life here on earth, even though it may be lived with Christ's personal presence for a thousand years under the most favorable conditions, still falls far short of heaven. It would be stepping down from a vastly higher plane to something far inferior. It would mean a substituting of Heaven for earth again, of holy and sinless environments to unholy and sinful surroundings. This we believe to be impossible. This is one of the saddest and most unscriptural defects in the whole premillennialistic plan of the future.

We believe that when Christ comes again there will be a new heaven and a new earth. Creation will be restored and the curse shall be removed. This is not the millennium of which the Chiliast speaks, but this is the beginning of eternity on earth. Joyfully anticipating the renewing of all things, including the restoration of the whole creation of God, which shall accompany the complete consummation of the great purpose of redemption, the whole Christian church looks forward to Christ's coming. The Bride shall then be united with the Bridegroom. Sin and death shall be abolished and the Prince of Peace shall establish His final kingdom. EVEN SO COME LORD JESUS.

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The following books and articles were assigned by Dr. Warfield in a Thesis course on "Pre-millennialism." We print this list since many of our ministers and laymen are especially anxious to know Warfield's assignment of books on this subject.

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Other books that were studied with great benefit are:

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Pieters, "Why We Baptize Infants."

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Beets, "Reformed Doctrine."

Heyns, "Reformed Doctrine."

Kuiper, "While the Bridegroom Tarries."

Mauro, "The Gospel of the Kingdom" and other books of Mauro.

Ten Hoor "Gereformeerde Dogmatiek."

Many other valuable books could be added. In the above list the author especially recommends the material of **Dr. G. Vos** of Princeton and **Prof. Louis Berkhof** of our Calvin Seminary.

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